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A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR THE TEACHING OF "HUCKLEBERRY FINN," "DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE," AND FOUR SHORT STORIES WAS PRESENTED. THE SHORT STORIES WERE (1) "THE APPLE TREE" BY JOHN GALSWORTHY, (2) "THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND" BY H.G. WELLS, (3) "A DOUBLE-DYED DECEIVER" BY O. HENRY, AND (4) "A MYSTERY OF HEROISM" BY STEPHEN CRANE. THE GUIDE PROVIDED BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION, THEMATIC EXPLANATIONS OF EACH WORK, STUDENT QUESTIONS, TEACHING SUGGESTIONS, AND COMPOSITION TOPICS. THE STUDENT VERSION IS ED 010 821. RELATED REPORTS ARE ED 010 129 THROUGH ED 010 160 AND ED 010 803 THROUGH ED 010 832. (GD)

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HUCKLEBERRY FINN.
DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE,
SHORT STORIES.

Literature Curriculum IV,
Teacher Version,

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THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Literature Curriculum IV

Teacher Version

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Teacher Version

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

INTRODUCTION

Homer's Odyssey and Mark Twain's Roughing It and Huckleberry Finn are remarkably similar in structure and the kind of interest they generate. All belong to the large general class of journey literature, all are (or contain) stories of "adventures of the road" (wine-dark sea, overland trail, big muddy river), and as such are episodic in structure, the episodes standing as more or less independent narratives linked together by the active presence of the hero in each of them. Survival is the basic aim of Odysseus and Huck, and both are masters of guile in the interest of survival. They are experts in the art of disguise: Odysseus as "Noman" in the cave of Polyphemus can be thought of as the heroic prototype of Huck as "Sarah Mary Williams George Elexander Peters" in the "cave" of Mrs. Judith Loftus. Much of the interest of all three works derives from the social communities the hero visits and portrays--Mark and Huck like Odysseus "roamed the wide world" and "saw the cities of many peoples and learnt their ways." We can guess that the experiences reported by Mark and his hero have seemed hardly less remote and strange to their eastern and European audiences than did the adventures of Odysseus to the listeners the ancient bards sang or chanted to. All three works are romantic "histories," compounded of fact and fantasy, truth and the tallest of tales.

If Odysseus and Huck do have survival in common as the basic aim, the aim supplied by instinct, they differ considerably in their conscious aims: Odysseus (it has been remarked before) is a man striving to return home, Huck a boy in flight from home. The aging adventurer Odysseus wants only to get back to Ithaca where he will restore order and re-establish law, whereas Huck's flight represents a repudiation of the law and order of his Ithaca, St. Petersburg.

Below the tough-minded irony that is the source of our adult interest in Twain's novel is the escape fantasy imaged in the down-river drift, the raft dream that survives in the modern adult and if realized would make irony unnecessary, indeed impossible; for irony issues from the contradictions in the flawed humanity we know. In the Odyssey, the escape impulse is a temptation to be resisted. When the hero's mariners eat of the "honeyed fruit" in the land of the Lotus-eaters, "all thoughts of reporting to us or escaping were banished from" their minds.

> "All they now wished for was to stay where they were with the Lotus-eaters, to browse on the lotus and to forget that they had a home to return to. I had to use force to bring them back to the ships, and they wept on the way, but once on board I dragged them under the benches and left them in irons."

And, these ne'er-do-wells disposed of, Odysseus in short order has the others straining at their oars, cutting through the surf.

On Huck's raft the river-current does the work:

> "Soon as it was night out we shoved; when we got her out to about the middle we let her alone, and let her float wherever the current wanted her to; then we lit the pipes, and dangled our legs in the water, and talked about all kinds of things--we was always naked, day and night, whenever the mosquitoes would let us--the new clothes Buck's folks made for me was too good to be comfortable, and besides I didn't go much on clothes, nohow."

The nakedness makes the point: Huck here is Adam before the Fall into Experience, into the world of work and responsibility as we know it. The Adamic yearning was deep and persistent in Mark Twain. In *Roughing It*, published twelve years before the completion of our novel, it had already appeared in the image of drift upon the water. There, boating on the lake in the Nevada forest,

> "We usually pushed out a hundred yards or so from shore, and then lay down on the thwarts in the sun, and let the boat drift by the hour whither it would. We seldom talked. It interrupted the Sabbath stillness, and marred the dreams the luxurious rest and indolence brought. . . "

see also *Two Weeks On the Merrimack And Concord Rivers*, H.D.Thoreau

The yearning has not been in Mark alone; and it is a curious fact that the escape impulse appears as a motif more persistently in American literature than it does in the literature of densely-populated Europe, perhaps in part because for so long in our history the frontier was there, at first just to the west and then always a little farther west, working as a kind of receding symbol of "a way out" for everyman. It may also be linked, this impulse, with another strain in our culture --*strain* in both senses of the word--the "getting ahead" impulse. Ben Franklin made himself almost a myth-hero in its service in the writing of Poor Richard's aphorisms and the *Autobiography*, the first great American success story: the characteristics of this hero are industriousness, almost unlimited energy, and a highly developed social sense. The story of Rip Van Winkle begins the counter-myth, a kind of celebration of failure ("His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray or get among the cabbages. . ."); so he retreats from the busy community into the "deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged," and drinks from the flagon of oblivion, his lotus-flask, offered by the Dutch gnome. This counter-hero finds another manifestation in Cooper's Leatherstocking, another in Walt Whitman's "Walt Whitman," who loafs and invites his soul and sounds his "barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world," still another in Hemingway's Nick Adams, who makes his "separate peace" and cultivates the illusion of refuge from the world in his tent beside the Big Two-Hearted River. The industrious hero (gradually degenerating into the go-getter) becomes our official image; behind him always lurks, however, the tramp, the loafer, the ne'er-do-well, the Great Happy Hooligan, a mockery of the other hero's respectability, an affront to the solemn morality of diligence. If Huck Finn, son of the village drunkard and the least aggressive of heroes, can be thought of as having a mission, it must surely be to keep the mockery alive. He is the underside of the American coin, a scarecrow made to keep the Eagle out of Eden.

"Mark Twain": the Industrious Hero

Mark Schorer calls his biography of Sinclair Lewis "An American Life," and his subtitle would serve as well for any biography of Samuel Clemens, who combined in his own temperament the contradictory impulses of "getting ahead" and "letting go," the one appearing in the hard facts of his long career, the other in the fantasy elements that appear repeatedly in his works. The facts of the career follow the Franklin pattern, demanding a banner headline: Poor Boy Makes Good, Becomes International Celebrity.

He begins as the half-orphan in Hannibal, Missouri, who must leave school at an early age to make his own way and thereafter can seldom be at rest. There were many things to learn and the disciplines were demanding: first the printer's trade, beginning with apprenticeship; then the profession of steamboat pilot--beginning with a more arduous and even dangerous apprenticeship. The get-rich-quick antics in the Nevada gold fields were an interlude (treated with mockery and some bitterness in Roughing It), before he turned again to doing it the hard way by getting a job on the Virginia City Enterprise--"enterprise," naturally--and inventing the persona "Mark Twain." The jumping frog story brought him some fame and the travel letters sent back under newspaper contract first from the Sandwich Islands and then from the Mediterranean added to it. The Mediterranean dispatches were turned into Innocents Abroad (1869), which sold 100,000 copies in three years at $3.50 per copy. He was on his way. Humor, it seems, was Mark Twain's Comstock Lode, and all his life he worked at it diligently. Then it was the heyday of the platform lecturer and reader, and Mark's fifty or sixty public appearances in 1868-69 created a demand that he could always rely on but also often felt enslaved by (he quickly learned to despise the platform). The books accumulated, the sales undoubtedly helped by the popularity of the lecturer: Roughing It in 1872, The Gilded Age (with Charles Dudley Warner) in 1873, Tom Sawyer in 1876, A Tramp Abroad in 1880, Life on the Mississippi in 1883.

He was forty-nine when Huckleberry Finn appeared in 1884, and a very wealthy man; but he seemed never content and his energy may strike us as appalling. Business investment tempted him. He set up his own publishing firm and sank a small fortune in trying to further the invention of a typesetting machine that was never perfected. He was moving toward disaster, following again a familiar enough pattern. By 1894 he was bankrupt, and, at the age of fifty-nine, immediately --although dreading it--embarked upon a round-the-world lecture tour (performing in Portland on August 9, 1895) to recoup his losses: it had clearly become for him success or die. He lived. His public image, the personal splendor (like Huck's aristocratic Colonel Grangerford he affected white suits), remained intact. Writing itself had become, it must seem, compulsive (there were more than 20,000 pages of unpublished manuscripts left at the time of his death); and at the end the notebook entries develop symbolic significance. "My cash income for my books for 1902 was $60,000. . . . Cash from all sources something over $100,000." "Jan. 1, 1904. Lay abed nearly all day but wrote 3000 words, earning $900." An American Life.

Countering it is Huck, trying to unload his robbers' gold on Tom at the end of *Tom Sawyer*, selling it for a dollar to Judge Thatcher at the beginning of his own narrative. Countering it is the downriver drift through a country in which money is again and again, insistently, identified with robbery, fraud, property in slaves, and death: the corpse of Peter Wilks "laying in the coffin with that bag of money on his stomach." The image is paralleled in the heavy Bible spread out on the chest of the dying Boggs in the little one-horse town in Arkansaw.

Thomas Mann writes of Gustave Aschenbach, the writer-hero of *Death in Venice*, that he "was the poet-spokesman of all those who labor at the edge of exhaustion," and even our brief summary of Mark Twain's American life makes the statement apt for both Huck and his author, the prose lyricism of many of the book's passages more than justifying "*poet*-spokesman." We have tried to suggest that the downriver drift is a fantasy peculiar to America, a product of the strange union of "getting-ahead" and "letting-go." *Huckleberry Finn* can also, however, be associated with the ancient tradition of the Pastoral, Huck's raft and the great river providing us with our own version of Arcadia and the Forest of Arden--Huck our ragged Corydon. In this aspect the book can be understood as having issued from Mark's own idealizing nostalgia, activated in part by the heavy demands of his own arduous career: fantasy born of the modern fatigue.

But Mark knew the truth of things, and as Huck says at the start in *Tom Sawyer* "mainly he told the truth." Hardly all of it, however, in that book; all the truth had to be left to Huck, who gives us the shocking cry of the Shepherdson men pursuing the Grangerford boys, "Kill them, kill them!", and all the rest of the ugly evidence that adds up to more than "enough to make a body ashamed of the human race." This is the book's anti-romantic side, its realistic emphasis that helps to create its artistic tension and lends force and significance to the escape impulse, making it seem *necessary*, necessary indeed for the soul's salvation. There may be a note of desperation in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

In any case, Mark knew what he had seen, and *saw* what he had known; and as he grew older he suffered more and more from the poison of black pessimism--even, if we can believe he meant what he wrote, of life-hatred. Even the wit that often flashes in the indictments he brings against "the damned human race" in his last phase cannot blind us to their strident savagery:

> "I have been reading the morning paper. I do it every morning--well knowing that I shall find in it the usual depravities and basenesses and hypocrisies and cruelties that make up civilization, and cause me to put in the rest of the day pleading for the damnation of the human race."
>
> "Of all God's creatures there is only one that cannot be made the slave of the lash. That one is the cat. If man could be crossed with the cat it would improve man, but it would deteriorate the cat."
>
> "If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man."
>
> "Of the demonstrably wise there are but two: those who commit suicide, and those who keep their reasoning faculties atrophied with drink."
>
> "All people have had ill luck, but Jairus's daughter and Lazarus had the worst."

In his great novel, Huck's instinctive compassion offers itself as a frail human stay against the collapse into total pessimism, a counterforce to the inhuman contempt embodied in the murderer of the harmless drunk Boggs; but Sherburn and all the rest of the Yahoo tribe are there, the dark underside of Huck's innocent voyage.

The Novel

A. Prologue (Chapters I-III)

pretentious, presumptuous, and simply bad taste

Mark began work on Huckleberry Finn immediately after the completion of Tom Sawyer in 1876, and the initial inspiration was sustained through the sixteenth chapter, in which Huck and Jim realize that they have been carried past Cairo and the mouth of the Ohio River (the avenue into freedom for Jim) in the fog of the preceding chapter. Mark must have seen this as the most troublesome point in his narrative, and many readers have been uneasy about the continuation thereafter of the downriver drift ever deeper and deeper into slave territory. We shall try to find ways of making a kind of sense of it. The first sixteen chapters, however, are firmly held together in a fusion of theme, narrative, and ruling intention, and deserve close critical attention.

The first three chapters, which have not been universally admired, may be taken as the book's prologue, in which a transition is effected between Tom Sawyer and the new venture. The first chapter is an extension and--thanks to the new narrative voice of Huck--dramatization of what Huck discovered in the last chapter of the earlier book: that his heroism in saving the Widow Douglas from mutilation and his six-thousand-dollar share in the loot of the cave have brought him not happiness but only grief--

> "Huck Finn's wealth. . . and the Widow Douglas's protection introduced him into society--no, dragged him into it, hurled him into it--and his sufferings were almost more than he could bear."

"Being rich," he tells Tom, "ain't what it's cracked up to be." "I Discover Moses and the Bullrushers" starts with this rebellion, but with a new emphasis indicated in the chapter title and sharpened by the introduction of the character of the Widow's sister Miss Watson, the "tolerable slim old maid with goggles on": the emphasis on the hell-fire religion that enforces the code of social respectability with the threat of eternal punishment in the "bad place." Huck's response to it establishes his pragmatic outlook at the start: he loses interest in Moses when he discovers that he has "been dead a considerable long time"; he rejects Miss Watson's heaven because he "couldn't see no advantage in going where she was going." Dimly, however, he seems to realize that his repudiation isolates him as an alien in the rule-ridden household, and he goes alone to his room in a mood of profound melancholy --he tries to "think of something useful, but it warn't no use. . . I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead." So with extraordinary swiftness one of the book's main thematic lines has been laid down. To belong to the community is to be intolerably bound by its restrictions and plagued by its code's affront to common sense; but not to belong is to be plunged into an intolerable aloneness. This is Huck's dilemma, and every man's. At the end of the chapter he scrambles out the window and joins Tom.

The second and third chapters pick up the other thread from the last chapter of Tom Sawyer, the game of robber in "Tom Sawyer's Gang." "Being rich," Tom tells Huck there, "ain't going to keep me from turning robber" (how proud Mark must have been of that sly touch). Tom uses the Gang as bait to keep Huck in the social straitjacket--"Huck, we can't let you into the gang if you ain't respectable,you know." The dialogue of Chapter II of the new book also pursues another lead provided at the end of the earlier one, but again with sharpened emphasis and significance: Tom's game is ruled by the "authorities," by the books, just as Miss Watson's religion is ruled by the Book (Mark forces this upon us by having Tom play variations on the theme "what's in the books" five times in the space of single page of dialogue). Huck finally makes the connection: he cannot make sense out of the story of Aladdin's lamp and the "genies," but, a good empiricist, gives it a try when he is alone, just as, at the beginning of Chapter III, he has put Miss Watson's doctrine of the efficacy of prayer to the test. It doesn't work.

> "So then I judged that all that stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer's lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me, I think different. It had all the marks of the Sunday School."

Tom passes from the stage, not to walk on again until he arrives at the Phelps place at the end of the book. Huck is alone again.

There is little artistic faltering in this three-chapter prologue. Rebellion against the household gods in the interest of freedom and common sense carries with it the penalty of loneliness. Tom seems to offer companionship. But Tom's code is as senseless as Miss Watson's: the society is of a piece.

The arrival of Pap introduces a second phase in the young hero's struggle with his problem. The arrival of Jim on Jackson's Island will be the third, in which a solution is offered.

Tom's bookish game has another thematic function: his make-believe highwaymen provide a parody introduction to the real ruffians and cut-throats encountered later on the voyage: romanticism undercut by realism. Tom and Huck are descendants of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, with the difference that Tom at the end does not have the truth about himself forced upon him.

B. Pap (Chapters IV-VII)

Huck's money puts him in the community: it also brings back Pap. The attempt to stall off Pap by "selling" the money to Judge Thatcher of course fails, for even Pap's "rights" are protected by another institution of the community, the civil court. Everything in the society is against Huck's liberation: the social code, religion, the law. The possibility of getting Huck's money by law suit keeps Pap around, but the powers of the community have ways of delaying the law, which can also be used to take Huck away from Pap ("a man's own son, which he has had all the trouble. . . of raising") and put him under the guardianship of the Widow. Which is preferable, the Widow's way of life or Pap's?

For a while during Huck's enforced Life with Father on the Illinois shore it seems to him that Pap's way is better.

> "It was kind of lazy and jolly, laying off comfortable all day, smoking and fishing, and no books nor study. . . I had stopped cussing, because the Widow didn't like it; but now I took to it again because Pap hadn't no objections. It was pretty good times up in the woods there, take it all around."

But Pap, if he is the Father, is also a snake in Eden--in the throes of delirium tremens a whole passel of snakes. He threatens Huck with the knife, Eden becomes dangerous, and Huck must flee, this time of his own will, and from both bondages--Huck is clear on that: he must "fix up some way to keep pap and the widow from trying to follow" him. Both surrogate parent and real parent are felt as enemies. The only expedient is death--simulated death. He collects his supplies, "cleans out the place," lays out the false trails, and is off downstream in that "beauty" of a canoe providentially provided by the June rise; by nature.

Pap is an extraordinary creation, the poor white, the ignoble savage of the village community. Forever cut off from its prosperity by his drunken shiftlessness, recognizing its impregnable solidarity, he must rage against it in a senseless fury that in the book contrasts dramatically with Huck's private repudiations. He sees himself as helpless victim unjustly persecuted. Education is a part of the village social power and thus an enemy: "I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better'n what he is." "Govment" is an enemy: the law that stands ready "to take a man's son away from him," that keeps him out of his property--the law that says you "can't sell a free nigger till he's been in the state six months." Old Man Finn is the first portrait in the book's gallery of Yahoos, and his destructive resentment of the village Establishment and his hatred of mind in any manifestation stand for the anarchy that has always threatened the order of the democratic Republic.

Pap and Huck are set in ironic contrast. Miss Watson might say, sniffing, like father like son, and perhaps be half right. They are both outsiders, and "it was pretty good times up in the woods there, take it all around." But Pap has been corrupted by the very society he rails against: he doesn't reject its power, he simply envies it. His attitude toward the "nigger" is simply an ignorant vulagarization of Miss Watson's attitude, perhaps even the Widow Douglas's. Hence both must be kept from trying to follow Huck, the hero of the unspoiled heart. The nigger will be Huck's Good Companion.

C. Jim (Chapters VIII-XI)

To save himself, then, Huck kills himself, floats supine in the bottom of the canoe down to his island refuge, "heavy-timbered and standing up out of the middle of the river, big and dark and solid, like a steamboat without any lights." There he lies "in the grass and cool shade thinking about things, and feeling rested and rather comfortable and satisfied." The community floats by on the ferry-boat, trying to recapture at least his "carcass," gives up, returns to its citadel. His death is confirmed. "I knowed I was all right now. Nobody would come a-hunting after me." The Fugitive is safe. He makes "a nice camp in the thick woods."

Then Mark again picks up the theme established in the Prologue. The Fugitive is "pretty well satisfied; but by and by it got sort of lonesome." He goes to the bank, listens to the current, counts "the stars and drift-logs and rafts that come down"--"there ain't no better way to put in time when you're lonesome." He explores the island ("I was boss of it"), wanting "to know all about it; but mainly I wanted to put in the time."

Yet the human sign of the still smoking campfire panics him--"My heart jumped up amongst my lungs" (it is Crusoe's panic on seeing the footprint). Retreating, "If I see a stump, I took it for a man" --man, the Fugitive's enemy. But of course it is not "man" on the island with him, but only Jim, a fellow-fugitive. For him he can be alive.

> "I warn't long making him understand I warn't dead. I was ever so glad to see Jim. I warn't lonesome now. I told him I warn't afraid of him telling the people where I was."

The problem set up in the first chapter has found solution, the unspoiled heart meets its true companion in the runaway slave, Fugitive from the community's law of property, fellow-victim of Miss Watson. "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

The first eight chapters of the book, running to about seventy pages, make a continuous narrative sweep vitalized by the single theme of rebellion linked with loneliness and brought to its resolution in Huck's act of recognition of the natural bond between him and Jim. It is followed by the pastoral idyll of the first half of Chapter IX, with its lyrical climax in the spectacular storm viewed by the fugitives from their cave refuge, the sky outside one moment "bright as glory," then

> "dark as sin again in a second, and now you'd hear the thunder go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling, down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels downstairs--where it's long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know."

The homely image of the bouncing barrels coming at the end of the mounting cadences of this long sentence celebrating the glory of nature in the high fury of storm is characteristic of Huck's poetic style at its best. It is a similar artistic impulse that leads Mark at the end of this fine chapter to counter the romantic idyll of the first half with the ugly "House of Death," clearly a frontier bawdy house, with its greasy cards, old whiskey bottles, robbermasks, and on the walls "the ignorantest kind of words and pictures made with charcoal." And of course the naked dead man--Pap, as we and Huck discover at the end, brought to his reward in the place of business of another of this society's institutions. Both the style and the structure are based upon the principle of contradiction, the source of the book's pervasive irony, a principle that supplies constantly a safeguard against the sentimental temptation.

And the idyll must end; in this world refuge can be only temporary. Huck by himself, officially dead, is safe. The chase was abandoned, he has won his freedom, the only goal of his quest. But when his freedom's penalty, loneliness, is lightened by the arrival of Jim, so joyously greeted, Huck is faced with another kind of bondage, the chain of responsibility that is the penalty paid for love. And although Huck is safe, Jim is not, for Jim is property, and the community cannot take the loss of property lightly. So, out of simple restlessness, Huck assumes his disguise and pays his visit to Mrs. Loftus on the outskirts of the Missouri village (Chapter XI), and as he listens to her gossip the responsibility descends. The search for the lost property is on, Eden must be abandoned. "Git up and hump yourself, Jim! There ain't a minute to lose! They're after us!"

Us. The boy and the slave are one; and, expelled from the Garden, young Adam must now try to come to terms with the problem of guilt.

D. "Conscience"

The moral ordeal that Huck must go through for Jim is the result of the whole massive weight upon him of the ingrained assumptions of the slave society. By the 1840's, the decade of Huck's voyage, under the impact of the first Abolitionist attacks from the North, the assumptions were being brought up into the conscious mind and provided with a "philosophy." In the backwoods village of Huck's world, however, the assumptions live in the dark provinces of psychology, are not matters of doctrine or philosophy--are not, that is, arguable. They are simply grown into, as all habitual practices of a culture are, and are thus infinitely more formidable than the tenets of a religion which must be taught after the human creature has achieved some maturity, and may therefore be questioned, as Huck questions them. But his experience with the slave puts his pragmatic skepticism to its severest test. For after all Huck like his father has grown up in this society and his "conscience" has been shaped by it, as conscience always is--Mark's concept of it is modern. Huck then is not all Innocent. The negro, Jim, is his intimate companion and fellow fugitive. But Jim as Negro Slave becomes an Abstraction, becomes Property, and when that happens Huck's thinking becomes confused.

The first warning of what is to come appears at the end of the chapter called "Fooling Poor Old Jim." Jim, having discovered that Huck has played upon his love for the sake of a joke, solemnly reprimands the boy with all the dignity of his injured human heart: "Dat truck dah is trash; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's and makes 'em ashamed."

> "Then he got up slow and walked to the wigwam, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed his foot to get him to take it back.
>
> "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger; but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterward. . ."

This of course is purely personal, something private between Huck and his friend, and triumph of heart here carries no penalties of conscience afterward. It is different a day or two later when Jim himself inadvertently makes it impossible for Huck to hide from himself any longer the fact that in helping Jim get to the free state of Ohio he is breaking a law, stealing a piece of property, the property of Miss Watson, who "tried to be good to him every way she knowed how" (Chapter XVI). Again, the heart wins, this time over "conscience," but it is a serious offense and he must try to rationalize it. First the conventional village cliche to explain his "badness": "A body that don't get started right when he's little ain't got no show." Then his pragmatism begins to take over. He feels bad now, not having turned Jim in; but he would also have felt bad if he had turned him in.

> "Well, then, says I, what's the use you learning to do right when it's troublesome to do right and ain't no trouble to do

> wrong, and the wages is just the same? I was stuck, I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time."

But he will have to face it again, when, near the end, the King sells Jim to the Phelpses for forty dollars. The moral crisis returns. He thinks of setting everything right by writing to Miss Watson, but rejects it in a curious seizure of social pride: "it would get around that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom." Religion is now involved, the religion he thought he had rejected. He tries to pray--not for a fishline this time--but knows it would be false, "because my heart warn't right; it was because I wasn't square." "You can't pray a lie--I found that out." Finally he writes the letter, and then: "I felt so good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life." But then his treacherous heart--his "sin"--betrays him. He thinks of the Jim who has taken care of him, and their good times together, and all the evidence of Jim's love for him--and

> "It was a close place. I took [the letter] up, and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:
>
> 'All right, then, I'll go to hell'--and tore it up.
> It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming."

The interesting thing, the right thing, about Mark's handling of all this is that Huck's opinion of the immorality of his decision is never changed: he does not set his instinct, his heart, against the code of the society, and conclude that it is the code and not the private heart that is evil. There is no change, no growth, in Huck's moral ideas. He is no revolutionary. His mind remains conservative. And the old habits continue to govern his responses to the familiar stimuli, as when, after his tale about the steamboat accident, he answers Aunt Sally Phelps's "Good gracious! anybody hurt?" with the immediate "No'm. Killed a nigger." So also he is deeply shocked when Tom agrees to help him in setting Jim free, and when he finds that Tom has known that Jim has been free all along, he is immensely relieved. Tom's respectability is undamaged after all.

> "--sure enough, Tom Sawyer had gone and took all that trouble and bother to set a free nigger free! and I couldn't ever understand before, until that minute. . . , how he could help a body set a nigger free with his bringing-up."

He couldn't, of course, with his bringing-up.

E. The River

The cry, "They're after us," forces the fugitives onto the River at the end of Chapter XI, and then begins the 1100-mile descent that will end finally with Jim in chains on the Phelps farm near the "little bit of a shabby village named Pikesville." The river current takes over as the main determinant of the narrative sequence, and in doing so develops a symbolic power of its own, so much so that modern critics have felt it as a god-like force, a nature god generally benign, as Lionel Trilling has written--"a being of long sunny days and spacious nights"; but also, "like any god, . . . dangerous and deceptive." It contains, that is, as Mr. Trilling does not say, within itself the contradiction that we have noted as supplying so much of the book's tension and irony. In its benign moods the River makes the life on the raft as romantically idyllic as the life on the island has been, and its very drift "symbolizes" if you please man's deep impulse to "let go," to trust blindly to the general drift of life; in its dangerous phases it seems to associate itself with the book's "realistic" counter-force, so cruelly manifested in the Shepherdson cry of "Kill them, kill them!" On another level the contradiction may seem to reflect the opposition in Mark himself between the escape nostalgia that gives the book so much of its appeal and the pessimism that under cuts all illusion and sees human effort as always unavailing. The River's benignity seems to encourage the belief in the possibility of the freedom which is the goal of the two fugitives; its malignity suggests that this is pure illusion and that the quest for freedom can only issue in chains.

In any case the drift past Cairo in the fog that brought to an end the first phase of composition of 1876-77 must be felt as a crucial turning-point not only in the fortunes of the fugitives but a kind of turning-point in the book's art as well. The fog itself, the River as it were vaporized, is handled in such a way as to give it extraordinary metaphorical significance. To begin with, the incident is the first time since the happy meeting on the island that the companions have been separated, the bond broken, foreshadowing the several separations that are to follow. The blank whiteness that surrounds Huck makes his dreadful isolation visible, and floating through it on the current "you feel like you are laying dead still on the water." The shifting location of the whoops that would reunite the two is of the essence of the deceptiveness at the heart of things in this world--Jim's whoop "kept coming, and kept changing its place." All sense of direction is lost, chasing the whoops "was worse than chasing a Jack-o-lantern"; and when Huck, having finally given up in despair, awakens from his sleep under a clear night sky he finds the canoe spinning "stern first" down the big bend. Clearly the whole nightmare experience defines a world ruled by deceit and blind chance in which the individual is totally helpless and, so far as the outcome is concerned, there is no difference between sleeping and waking. It is an experience that perhaps explains the real point of the mock motivational pattern that superstition furnishes in the book (the turning-point chapter is entitled "The Rattlesnake-skin Does Its Work"). It may be as "true" to say that this world is ruled by spilled salt, hair-ball oracles, and the touch of the skin of a snake, as it is to say that it is ruled either by "Providence" (an idea for which Mark had a special contempt) or human will and intelligence.

So in the fog they have drifted past the mouth of the Ohio, the avenue to freedom; and then the canoe which could have been propelled back up against the current is lost. They are at the mercy of the current of the "god" (only four miles an hour, but resistless on a raft); nothing to do then but "wait till we got a chance to buy a canoe to go back in." But immediately comes the apparent wreck of the raft itself by the steamboat and the second separation. After the second reunion the voyage down is resumed, the authority of the raft is usurped by the "King" and the "Duke," and there is no further mention of a return upriver, even when right after the Grangerford episode, another canoe is found. When "freedom" does come to Jim it is by virtue of the worn-out device of the death-bed repentance. Huck of course will move on, light out for the territory, the "outfit" for the new flight to be bought by the six thousand dollars in robbers' gold he has earlier tried so hard to escape from as a curse.

There is a "turning-point" in the art of the book in that after Cairo the balance of narrative emphasis is shifted from the River and raft to the Mississippi shores, in major episodes that increase in arithmetic progression: two chapters for the Grangerford-Shepherdson affair (followed after the reunion by one last lyrical idyll in Chapter XIX brought to an end by the arrival of the two rascals), four chapters for the "Arkansaw" theatricals (embracing the murder of Boggs), and six chapters for the most ambitious (and perhaps least successful) of them, the business of the Wilks family. All are fairly good stories, held together primarily by the sharp observing eye of Huck, who sets down for us in the most concrete detail the manners and morals of the various social levels represented in these episodes: the "mansion" and village households of Grangerfords and Phelpses, the stores and houses, mud and pigs and loafers, of that one-horse town in Arkansaw, etc. They are of interest as social history, making a link with Roughing It, and, in spite of such things as the Romeo-Juliet romance dragged into the Grangerford story, probably have documentary value. Morally they picture a world in almost total corruption, which of course moves onto the raft with the two rapscallions, submitted to by Huck and Jim because "what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others." The sentiment emphasizes the helpless frailty of innocence in such a world. But the transcendence of Huck's instinctive human pity when (for example) witnessing the rough justice meted out to the rascals by the frontier mob may represent the only possible triumph over the damnation that Mark in later life said he prayed for. Huck's example may suggest that it was Mark who was damned. Huck the Scarecrow of Salvation.

F. Phelps Farm

Given the implications of the narrative after Cairo, one supposes Jim had to end up in chains, in an ironic negation of the drift-illusion of freedom. Then what? Leave him there? Bind the orphan Huck "out to a mean old farmer in the country" as he was in the story he made up for Mrs. Loftus?--neat touch, that would have been. Or what?

Mark's actual solution of the problem has not satisfied fastidious readers, and among recent critics probably only Mr. Trilling and Mr. Eliot have made serious attempts to argue its rightness, and they are not very impressive, Mr. Eliot giving up after a one-sentence try at it with the question, "if this was not the right ending for the book, what ending would have been right?"

The objections are well-known. The start of it (Chapter XXXII, "I Have a New Name") seems promising: for Huck after all his other disguises to have Tom's identity forced upon him is a wry irony indeed; and then to have Tom to show up as Sid, a mixup bearing intimations of Shakespeare. The result, however, is something less than Shakespearian.

First, Huck, who has privately repudiated Tom's make-believe at the end of the third chapter and whose experiences since then have emphasized his firm independence, now gives in immediately to Tom's domineering spirit. In so doing, he cooperates in a scheme that not only brings serious discomfort to his true friend but obviously endangers the escape Huck has come there to effect. Then, the revelation that Tom has known that Jim has been free all along makes his Dumas-Walter Scott game appear as a cruel postponement of Jim's liberation, but we are clearly intended to be amused by it. Then, the requirements of the narrative device force Jim down to the level of the stock stage darky, the coon. Finally, as we have already suggested, the whole meaning of the freedom quest with all the tragic implications of the long descent past Cairo is subverted by the easy device of Miss Watson's change of heart.[1] The last could just possibly be justified as a twist of Mark's pessimistic irony, but it seems fairly clear that such was not its intention.

It is probable that these objections will not present themselves in the classroom, and perhaps in what may be the first reading of the book for many students, they should not be emphasized too strongly. They should however be introduced as questions. They make an opportunity for a fruitful kind of literary speculation, a way of making it clear that the work of the artistic imagination is an extended process of problem-solving. "If this was not the right ending for the book, what ending would have been right?"

Send Jim back to Miss Watson, leaving her unregenerate? Bind Huck out to "a mean old farmer"?

No? Why not?

Instead of having Tom wounded in the mock attempt at escape, have Jim killed ("After 'em, boys, and turn loose the dogs!"). Then Tom confesses Jim had been free. Tragic self-knowledge for Tom, final repudiation of Tom by Huck. "It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings can be awful cruel to one another."

Yes? No? Why or why not?

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[1] Most of these objections are set forth by Leo Marx in his essay, "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and Huckleberry Finn." See "Postscript."

Or let Huck go along with Tom's game for a while, but balk at the warnings that in the book bring the fifteen farmers with their guns and dogs to the Phelps place. Another private repudiation. Huck then frees Jim himself before Tom can get on with it, sets him safely back to the raft and away. But away where? Then another separation. Jim's end not known. Perhaps drowned. Huck on alone, then, down, senselessly, toward the Gulf. End not known.

Yes? No? Why or why not?

The present ending is right as it is.

Yes? Why?

G. First Person Singular: Style

But the flawed ending, if it is flawed, can be felt as only a minor nuisance in a work that comes so close to being a masterpiece, that exerts its power and its poetry in so many different ways; and if there is a single secret (not very well kept) of its rightness generally, it surely lies in Mark's initial decision in this book to surrender so far as possible his vision and control to his narrator, to understand that the boy Huck Finn was Mark's own greatest impersonation. Writing the book, his voice was Huck's voice and Huck's way of seeing things his way. The impersonation involved of course Mark's projection into the boy of something of his own complexity. Huck's force derives in part from the fact that he is a blend of opposite traits. He is very wise in some matters, very ignorant in others. He is sensible and pragmatic in his approach to many problems, but he is also hopelessly superstitious. The decisions that spring from his heart are morally right, but when he tries to think about them he comes out on the wrong side. His wisdom and common sense and moral rightness make him a dependable witness of the complex world of his own experience. If he is incapable of telling the whole truth, he will still tell nothing but the truth as he sees it. As Mr. Trilling has said, although he lies without hesitation when lies seem necessary, he never tells "the ultimate lie of adults": he never lies to himself.

On the other hand, Mark understands things that Huck does not and shares that secret understanding with the reader in the kind of double communication called irony. Huck concludes, "I'll go to hell," and believes he will. Mark is saying to us by means of all the book's presented evidence, he'll go to heaven if there is one. Huck's misjudgment of his soul's condition at once underlines his courage in this "close place" and delivers the real truth with the strongest possible impact.

We have skirted the question of Huck's humor, both conscious and unconscious, partly because it is so self-evident and partly because the analysis of humor is usually a disastrous undertaking. When it is unconscious it is of ironic quality, but irony without serious intent. Of the wooden leg:

> "--just as we was leaving I found a tolerable good currycomb, and Jim he found a ratty old fiddle-bow, and a wooden leg. The straps was broke off of it, but, barring that, it was a good enough leg, though it was too long for me and not long enough for Jim, and we couldn't find the other one, though we hunted all around."

Often it is simply a function of his blunt realism. Of Pap's room in the new judge's home after a spree:

> "--when they come to look at that spare room they had to take soundings before they could navigate it."

And often the humor softens the coolest personal judgment. Of the art and personality of poor morbid Emmeline Grangerford:

> "These was all nice pictures, I reckon, but I didn't somehow seem to take to them, because if ever I was down a little they always give me the fan-tods. Everybody was sorry she died, because she had laid out a lot more of these pictures to do, and a body could see by what she had done what they had lost. But I reckoned that with her disposition she was having a better time in the graveyard."

Always it has a recognizable similarity to what we know of Mark's own comic manner. Little wonder, since the manner at its best issued naturally from the same American origins as Huck's. The Huck impersonation imposed no great strain upon the author.

And Huck is his style, his speaking voice, a new language and revolutionary syntax rendered in cadences that seldom falter and seem always perfectly adjusted to the material given it to work with. The initial stylistic decision was in essence a compromise: the phonetic misspelling that was the stock-in-trade of contemporary dialect humorists would be kept to the barest minimum, so that even the final g is always there (it probably should be dropped in reading aloud); punctuation is on the whole meticulous, with frequent semicolons operating usually as caesura markers in Huck's peculiar poetic line; grammatical violation is actually less frequent than we may think it is, appearing chiefly as such minor sins as number disagreement between subject and verb, displacements of those by them, and occasional syntactical tangles that nevertheless seem functional and are always perfectly lucid, as in

> "by and by you could see a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there's a snag there in a swift current which breaks on it and makes that streak look that way."

It is easy enough to untangle it:

> "by and by you could see a streak on the water caused by a swift current breaking on a hidden snag."

But if the revision pleases the schoolteacher it offends the ear and artistic sense. Huck's unsyntactical extension adds emphasis by slowing down, by dwelling longer on the precise particulars, and it gives the observation a grammatical movement or action that suggests the movement of the water.

The language is distinguished by a persistent concreteness, expressive of Huck's observant directness, a function of his feeling for the truth of things, and it makes a point of his inability to manage abstractions, to conceptualize, which so often distorts reality out of existence. It is a perfect instrument for the descriptive tasks of realism, as in the presentation of the Grangerford household and that store-fronted street in the Arkansaw mud. The great lyrical passages seem to soar, but without departing from the sensuous shape and color and movement of things. The long paragraph that opens the nineteenth chapter in a moment of quiet and pause after the ugly turbulence of the feud on shore, will repay close study. The last half of it is a single long sentence (beginning "The first thing to see, looking a way over the water. . . ") that brings to visual life the movement of the dawn, with the successive cadences marking the slow advance of the great morning effulgence--

> "--you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river , and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t'other side of the river--"

--and so it continues, until the grand climax is reached--

> "--and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song-birds just going it!"

Hallelujah!

The great achievement of Huck's prose, as Mr. Trilling remarks, is "by no means accidental." It is the result of an art of calculated ease, issuing from "the strictest literary sensibility." It is a "style that escapes the fixity of the printed page, that sounds in our ears with the immediacy of the heard voice, the very voice of unpretentious truth."

H. In the Classroom

We have dealt with The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn at some length because it is a book that Americans have lived with so long that familiarity may have the effect of concealing its true features as it does those of the face of a member of the family with whom we have grown up. It is of course obvious that there is more here than can --perhaps even should--be introduced explicitly in the tenth-grade classroom; but it is hoped that what can be done may be guided and informed by our total resources, which in the craft of teaching can never be too great.

We have given some emphasis to the book's background, its "sources," in our discussions of such things as Mark Twain's own American career (tenth grade students may begin with some review of Roughing It, read in the ninth) and the psychological characteristics of the slave society. Such historical connections can, we think, be made, as they were made in dealing with Roughing It and will be again in the tenth grade in the discussions of the Odyssey and of Julius Caesar and Plutarch. These are clearly opportunities for enrichment and should add interest to the study of literary works as literature. It is of course the art of literature that is our primary concern.

Postscript

The critical essays by Messrs. Eliot, Trilling, and Marx referred to in this "teacher version" are printed, along with many others, in the Norton Critical Edition of the novel. It also provides some relevant historical and biographical material and the text of the novel itself is annotated. It is an invaluable "resource" for the teacher.

Hal Holbrook's recording of "Mark Twain Tonight" is an excellent interpretation that is recommended for the classroom.

A NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Students should not be expected to go through the wearisome task of answering every question included in this unit, for this would be one of the most uninspiring ways to teach what is, in reality, a tremendously exciting novel. Questions suggested for this unit will, in most cases, prove more useful if used after students have read the whole book, or at least after they have read certain sections. For example, the issues dealing with the first eleven chapters could be handled when that much of the book has been read.

Prologue Chapters I-III

1. From the first three chapters of the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, it is apparent that this novel is much more than an account of a boy's carefree trip down the Mississippi. A major thematic line becomes immediately identifiable. In the opening chapter, for example, an element of tension is set up within Huck. This element--truth--is responsible for the tension and appears immediately in the first paragraph. What is Huck's basic attitude toward truth? What does Huck think of the widow? Of Miss Watson? What elements of society might they represent? Once Huck is by himself, is he any happier? Why not? What does he do at the close of Chapter I? What is the advantage of having Huck superstititious? Consider this point as well as his age and manner of speaking. What does Huck's commentary about the sights and sounds of the night reveal about one aspect of his outlook on life?

2. In Chapter II Huck joins the gang. Is he any better off for leaving the organized, restricted world of Miss Watson? Is the basis for the organization of the game played by the gang similar to the basis for proper living in the world of Miss Watson and Aunt Polly? How are Tom Sawyer's society and Miss Watson's society similar? Just as Huck put Miss Watson's doctrines of the efficacy of prayer to the test, he attempts to understand Tom Sawyer's world of Aladdin's lamp and the "genies." He is disappointed:

> So then I judged that all the stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer's lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me, I think different. It had all the marks of the Sunday School.

Huck rebels against this way of life. What two values does he believe in that created his dissatisfaction with his aunt's world as well as Tom's? What penalty must he pay for rebellion?

PAP (Chapters IV-VII)

3. The arrival of Pap introduces a second phase in the young hero's struggle with his problem. Huck's money puts him in the community. He attempts to get rid of the money by "selling" it to the judge. This fails; Pap, of course, will stick around as long as there is a possibility of getting Huck's money. The law suit drags on. Huck will either be placed under the guardianship of the Widow or live with his father. Are these alternatives any solution to Huck's problem? What social institution at work here is against Huck's liberation? Now, recall what other codes of civilization infringed upon Huck. At first Huck enjoys living with his father on the Illinois shore; it appears to be the better choice:

> It was kind of lazy and jolly, laying off comfortable all day, smoking and fishing, and no books nor study . . . I had stopped cussing, because the Widow didn't like it; but now I took to it again because Pap hadn't no objections. It was pretty good times up in the woods there, take it all around.

However, his life is hardly ideal. What is Huck's attitude toward Pap's treatment of him? Is it one of fear, love, or genuine respect? Consider Pap's own relationship to organized society. What particular aspects of society does he loudly lambast--ineffectual though he is? Locate passages of his specific criticisms. Why, for example, is he really against education? The "Govment"? If Miss Watson represents a thoroughly organized society, what does Pap represent? Yet is his attitude toward the "nigger" much different from Miss Watson's? Neither way of life is for Huck.

JIM (Chapters VIII-XI)

4. To save himself Huck plans carefully and escapes to his island of refuge. What does Huck's escape indicate about his knowledge of the ways of violence as well as his basic intelligence? Once his death is confirmed, he has time on his hands to think. What problem, brought out earlier in the prologue, does the fugitive Huck re-experience now that he is "boss" of his island? How is this resolved? What common condition does Jim, the runaway slave, now share with Huck?

5. For approximately eight chapters Twain has presented a continuous narrative emphasizing the themes of rebellion and loneliness, bringing this phase of the story to a resolution by joining Huck and Jim? Chapter IX appears to be almost a lyrical climax as Twain presents the spectacular storm viewed by the fugitives from their cave refuge.

Reread Twain's magnificent description of the storm. Notice the length of the last sentence. What advantage can you see in writing it this way? Can you see a difference between the imagery Mark Twain presents as he describes the increasing tempo of the storm and the images presented at the end of the mounting cadences of this long sentence?

This is typical of Mark Twain's style at its best, and one can see a similar contrast occurring within Chapter IX as a whole.

6. Can you see two images in this chapter? Do you see the latter image, the ugly "House of Death," as intruding upon the beautiful, natural scene described earlier? What might the contrast of these scenes be foreshadowing about the fate of Jim and Huck, safely isolated from men? Can they remain this way for very long? Huck shouldn't expect any problem, since he has been considered officially dead. His loneliness has been overcome since the arrival of Jim. But this very fact has created a new responsibility for Huck. What is it?

CONSCIENCE

7. Slavery was as much a part of Huck's world as were leaves on a tree, blue skies, and the rolling river. Negroes were not considered to be people; they were merely property. Remember Aunt Sally's reaction to Huck's tale of the steamboat accident? "Good gracious! Anybody hurt?" she asked. "No'm. Killed a nigger." "Well," she answered, "it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt." But Jim becomes something more than property to Huck. He removes the loneliness; he humbles Huck at the end of "Fooling Poor Old Jim." And Huck says that he "warn't ever sorry for it afterwards." Here love conquers pride, and the battle is not a long nor a very strenuous one. "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger." But Huck faces a more complex struggle when his love for Jim must do battle with his conscience, a conscience that had been molded by the laws of the land. What happens when Huck's heart and his conscience do battle in "The Rattlesnakeskin Does Its Work"? Which is the victor? How does Huck rationalize his actions? Trace his struggle when it occurs again in "You Can't Pray a Lie." Try to feel the intensity of this struggle. Does he rationalize so easily after this second victory of the heart? Why couldn't he pray? How does he arrive at his final commitment, "All right, then, I'll go to hell"? What plans does he make after these "awful thoughts and awful words"?

8. In one sense, Huck has very little confidence in himself. Comparing himself with Tom, for example, he views Tom as being good, while he himself is bad. Society's code is on the side of right; he himself is not. Once he decides to help Jim escape from the Phelps's farm, he accepts his decision as being immoral; but he can't accept Tom as being equally corrupt. Following this kind of reasoning, why do you think he is so relieved when he discovers that Tom, who directed Jim's escape, knew all along that Jim had been set free? Why do you think Huck had so little confidence in his own decisions? Do you think Mark Twain might have been using Huck to show that the laws of society or the customs of a particular culture are sometimes wrong? Explain. You will want to decide first whether or not Huck was right in what his heart told him to do about Jim. Huck thought he was wrong and chose to do the "wrong" in spite of the threat of damnation. Was Huck's real sin, perhaps, that he had too much faith in society and too little faith in himself? What his heart told him seemed the opposite of what his conscience told him. Did

the real conflict arise because he responded more to the conscience of society than to his own conscience? Had his conscience been as deeply molded by society as it might at first appear? Consider how instinctively good Huck was on so many occasions. His first response to anyone in trouble was sympathetic. He felt compassion even for the Duke and the King when they were tarred and feathered. Consider too the contrast in Huck. He feels sympathy for almost everyone, and yet he trusts no one except Jim. Give examples to show that although Huck knew of the weakness and depravity of man, he never lost his basically sympathetic nature. Consider this side of Huck in another way. When he is on the raft with Jim, he can be himself. When he makes his excursions into the country of men who live along the riverbank, he employs the strategy of deception because it had proven to be the only way a humble outcast like himself can survive.

THE RIVER

9. Beginning with Chapter XII, the river seems to become the main determinant of the narrative sequence. More than that, it becomes symbolically significant. Select passages which show how Huck feels about the river. What might the river symbolize?

10. The drift past Cairo in the fog marks a turning point in the lives of the fugitives and in the structure of the book as well. Defend or deny this statement, supporting you opinion by referring to specific events and to the way in which these events are presented.

The education of Huckleberry Finn was not being neglected. Each adventure on the shore teaches Huck some lesson about the pride and prejudice that characterized the South. What did his sojourn with the Grangerfords teach him? Remember Huck says he would never be able to forget what he saw.

12. The intrusion of the Duke and the King into the lives of Jim and Huck brings a whole series of difficulties which finally terminate in the two being tarred and feathered. Huck was quick to see that "these liars warn't no kings and dukes at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds." Jim, too, sees that "dese kings o' ourn is regular rapscallions." What might Mark Twain's attitude have been toward royalty in general if we consider the escapades of these two confidence men?

13. What did Huck learn about human nature in the Colonel Sherburn incident?

PHELPS FARM: PROBLEMS

14. The concluding episode on the little cotton plantation where Jim is being held offers an interesting contrast between Tom and Huck. Contrast and compare the two.

15. Recent critics have expressed their dissatisfaction with Mark Twain's conclusion to his tale of Huckleberry Finn. Do you feel satisfied with the ending of the book? If not, what would you have done? Would you have allowed Jim to be killed by the bullet that was intended for him and thus force Tom to suffer, knowing that his withholding of the knowledge of Jim's freedom was the real murder weapon? Would you have allowed Huck to bring about Jim's escape without the questionable assistance of Tom, thus enabling the two fugitives to return to their raft and to their search for freedom? You may be perfectly satisfied with the ending as Twain presented it, but such speculation will help you to see that part of the work of the creative writer involves the intricate process of problem-solving.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

by
Robert Louis Stevenson

Literature Curriculum IV

Teacher Version

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
By
Robert Louis Stevenson

Teacher Version

Few mysteries in literature have enjoyed the longevity and popularity of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson, written in 1886. It is his most celebrated and, according to Henry James, his most serious tale.

The novel, if indeed it may be so classified since its brevity makes it more closely akin to the long short story, is a departure from and in marked contrast to the other works of literature which have been studied by the students in the eighth and ninth grades.

It bears little resemblance in structure, theme, character or plot to The Call of the Wild and The Pearl studied in grade eight, or to Roughing It and The Old Man and the Sea read in grade nine. It is of a different literary type from any of these works and properly belongs to the mystery genre which includes "William Wilson" by Edgar Allan Poe, and The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde would seem to be a moral allegory, but it might as accurately be called a psychological mystery, a romantic tragedy, or simply a remarkably credible fantasy. The teacher therefore may classify the novel as he wishes and use his own judgment as to the most effective and desirable approach to the novel in the classroom. In any case, the story is the one upon which Stevenson's reputation as an inventive and creative artist rests with the ordinary reader.

Where the previous literary works studied in grades eight and nine have dealt exclusively with reality, believable human experience, individuals in conflict with their environment, the elements, and human and non-human adversaries, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde transports the student into the realm of the unreal--into the region of the unexplainable and bizarre. Man's natural and formidable curiosity predisposes him to an interest in the supernatural, and this is a tale at once unfamiliar, ominous and chilling. Imaginative literature of this kind presented with ingenuity and skill can foster the development of the youthful reader's imaginative faculty. It can also sharpen and intensify his emotional responses to both prose fiction and poetry and, in the process, enrich his appreciation for each of these important literary forms.

As an introduction to "mystery" or "suspense" literature, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde has several significant virtues: it is short, compact and swiftly moving; close parallels to it are few and difficult to find, increasing the possibility that the subject matter will be fresh and perhaps encountered by the reader for the first time; it is believable because the writing carries with it an authority derived both from the language and the scientific-psychological problem with which the story is concerned; and it reflects Stevenson's belief in the duality of man's nature. Stevenson's belief in the existence of a dual nature in man has been attested to by his cousin and biographer Sir Thomas Balfour. It has been further suggested that

Stevenson may have been acutely aware of a conflicting duality in his own nature. The subject was not new in Stevenson's time nor unknown to his literary predecessors. It has haunted literature and men's minds for generations. Good and evil, the co-existence in man of the best and the worst, has occupied the thoughts of many of the most profound thinkers of all time. Mrs. Gaskell, another 19th century writer, as if anticipating The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, once wrote "all deeds however hidden and long passed by have their external consequences."

Brander Matthews, professor of literature at Columbia University from 1900 to 1924, wrote in Aspects of Fiction:

> Only a Scotsman could have written The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, as only a New Englander could have written The Scarlet Letter. There is an inheritance from the Covenanters, and a memory of the Shorter Catechism in Stevenson's bending and twisting the dark problems of our common humanity to serve as the core of his tales.

And Sir Arthur Conan Doyle writing in 1890 said in "Mr. Stevenson's Methods in Fiction":

> As long as man remains a dual being, as long as he is in danger of being conquered by his worse self, and, with every defeat, finds it the more difficult to make a stand, so long The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde will have a personal and most vital meaning to every poor, struggling human being.

The novel is a moral apologue of divided personality, and its basic concern is obviously with the problem of evil in man seen from the perspective of the awful consequences of Dr. Jekyll's separation of the elements of good and evil within himself and his willful upsetting of the delicate balance of his own nature.

AUTHOR

Treasure Island, Kidnapped, The Black Arrow, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and A Child's Garden of Verses, are probably more familiar to students than the man who wrote them. Stevenson's short life was unusually productive despite his constant and arduous struggle against ill health. He enjoyed a happy married life and, unlike many authors, was appreciated and loved during his lifetime. He committed himself to a literary career after abandoning plans to become a lighthouse engineer like his father, and after obtaining a law degree in 1875. His reputation as an author rests mainly on the novels Treasure Island, Kidnapped, and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, his body of short stories, and A Child's Garden of Verses which has become a part of our language.

EXPLICATION

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is essentially a tale of the ascendancy of evil over good in the body and soul of a man who believed that man is not one but two. Significantly, then, the protagonist is not one man but two: Dr. Henry Jekyll, affluent and respected London physician, and his alter ego, Edward Hyde, a deformed, sadistic, licentious reprobate who possesses no redeeming qualities, and is Satanic in the immensity and depth of his evil.

It is chiefly with the person and the actions of Edward Hyde that the novel is concerned. Stevenson withholds almost to the end the conclusive evidence of the common identity of the two men, but the perceptive student piecing together the contiguous parts of the unfolding action may come to the knowledge of the true relationship of Jekyll and Hyde before the climax.

The sequence of events which leads to disaster and death for both protagonists is set in motion at the moment of Dr. Jekyll's successful, although as it turns out fatal, discovery that the chemical agents with which he has been working to achieve the goal of separating his baser nature from the good have the power not only to alter but to obliterate the very fact of his true identity. It is at that critical and decisive moment that Edward Hyde is born, and the irreversible stream of consequences begins.

> I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of the separation of these elements. If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil.

This is Dr. Jekyll's motive; this is his rationale for violating his own nature, and death is the result of his conviction that man is not truly one, but truly two.

In Dr. Jekyll's presumption in assuming a prerogative belonging rightfully to no man there is an echo of the Greek *hubris* leading the tragic hero to disaster. And it may be that Stevenson, knowing well the inherent weakness in man, has created in Henry Jekyll an Everyman who would be virtuous and yet eat of the forbidden fruit with impunity. His moral is clear.

It is as Edward Hyde, the sinister profligate reveling in vice and all manner of dissolute behavior, that Dr. Jekyll commits depraved acts--the memory of which return to taunt and torment him. He remembers the wanton trampling of a child on a deserted London street, the murder of elderly genteel Sir Danvers Carew, the deliberate humiliation and demeaning of harmless people, and other crimes that are only hinted at.

Hyde is an anomaly; he is unique in that he has no human counterpart. He is a monster whose genesis is removed from all human experience. Jekyll is tall, well-made and handsome; Hyde is small, warped and repellant. Richard Enfield, cousin of Gabriel Utterson, the novel's chief point-of-view character says of him:

> He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarcely know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's extraordinary looking, and yet I can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him at this moment.

The fatal flaw in Jekyll's achievement is not immediately apparent. He is able to produce the transformations at will through the medium of chemicals and a particular salt compound, but as the transformations become more frequent, greater effort is required to return to the person of Jekyll. Inevitably the unthought of, the unanticipated and horrifying reversal takes place --Dr. Jekyll can no longer control the timing of the transformations; he becomes subject to involuntary change and is reduced to a terrified and doomed captive for whom there is no hope.

The climax of the novel takes place on this note. Trapped in the person of Edward Hyde and unable to return to his laboratory for the necessary materials to effect a transformation into Dr. Jekyll, he enlists the aid of an old friend and colleague, Dr. Hastie Lanyon. Preparations are made through a letter; the materials are gathered together by the bewildered physician and friend and at midnight Hyde arrives to claim them for Dr. Jekyll.

The chemical solution is prepared and Hyde offers Dr. Lanyon the alternative of leaving the room or remaining--at the risk of his sanity. The doctor chooses to remain and there witnesses the frightful and indescribably shocking transformation of Hyde into his long-time but estranged friend Dr. Henry Jekyll. The experience proves fatal to Dr. Lanyon, who suffers a complete physical deterioration and dies approximately two weeks later, another victim of Dr. Jekyll's experiment.

Once the transformation has been witnessed the novel moves with considerable acceleration to its end. The death of the protagonist(s) is, of course, inevitable; the reversal has become complete and Jekyll, locked in the office of his laboratory where he is trapped in the person of Hyde, is unable to effect a transformation because no chemist shop in London has a supply of the most essential ingredient in his formula--the particular salt.

It is while he is there, agonized and desperate over the critical situation in which he finds himself, that he writes the confession, or full statement of the case which is the final chapter of the novel. The confession supplies the answers to all the reader's (and characters') questions except the most provoking one, namely, what has become of Dr. Jekyll? It is Hyde who is found dying on the floor of the laboratory--a suicide from poison. Faced with imminent discovery by his lawyer, Gabriel Utterson, and his house servant, Poole, Hyde-Jekyll has taken his life.

In view of what is known of the nature of Edward Hyde, suicide might reasonably be questioned as his way of resolving the crisis, but the written confession and the altered will in Utterson's favor discovered among the papers on the desk suggest that there was more of Jekyll than of Hyde in that wretched and tormented man.

The structure or form of the novel is a series of interlocking revelations which carry the story forward in episodes; they are synthesized at the climax into a single terrible disclosure of irreparable scientific rashness and moral depravity. There are, in effect, ten parts or links in the chain of events which bind the novel together. It is suggested that the book be read in its entirety before class discussions are begun. Interrupting the continuity and mounting suspense of so short a novel, in which each successive revelation builds and intensifies the reader's expectations, would most probably result in a lessening of the student's emotional response to the action, reduce interest and impair the overall effect of this "masterpiece of concision" as it has been called by Henry James.

Gabriel Utterson is the novel"s principal point-of-view character. He is a close and devoted friend of Dr. Jekyll, and the chief events of the story are seen from his perspective or, when that is impossible, through him by means of eye-witness accounts, letters and documents, conversations with Dr. Lanyon and finally through Dr. Jekyll's confession.

The power and lasting quality of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are due largely to two sources: the nature of the subject matter--fallible, vulnerable man and the enigma of evil, and the tragedy that befalls the principal character. The motives, circumstances and internal action engage the reader and elicit belief. May it not be, as Stevenson suggests, that man is, indeed, not one, but two, and that evil is more native to our nature than virtue?

14. Dr. Jekyll exacts a promise from a reluctant Utterson--what is the promise?

15. What is the basis for Mr. Utterson's fears concerning the relationship between Hyde and Jekyll? What is his chief fear?

16. At Jekyll's dinner party for his old friends Utterson remains with him after the other guests have gone; what is his purpose? Is he successful in it?

17. What are the most important factors in the murder of Sir Danvers Carew? Is the evidence against Hyde conclusive? Cite some examples. What is the murderer's motive? How is Mr. Utterson involved in it?

18. What resemblance, if any, is there between Hyde's behavior at the time of the murder and his behavior on the occasion of running down the child on the deserted street?

19. It is suggested that the apprehension of Hyde by the police will be difficult --why?

20. Following the murder and after the unavailing search for Hyde, Utterson goes to Jekyll as his friend and legal counsel. Jekyll speaks of a letter--presumably from Hyde that he hesitates showing to the police. Utterson says, "You fear, I suppose, that it might lead to his detection?" Jekyll answers, "No, I cannot say that I care what becomes of Hyde; I am quite done with him. I was thinking of my own character, which this hateful business has rather exposed." Utterson views this as selfishness on Jekyll's part but not because he has any sympathy for Hyde. What is the reason for the lawyer's surprise?

21. Dr. Jekyll's agitated behavior at his meeting with Mr. Utterson shortly after the murder of Sir Danvers is, to all appearances, a sincere and spontaneous one. What is the truth of Jekyll's performance, and especially of the alleged letter from Hyde?

22. What evidence do you find in the conversation between the two men to indicate that Utterson is innocent of any suspicion of the truth about the Jekyll-Hyde relationship?

23. Jekyll in his extremity and anxiety over what has happened says to Utterson, "I have had a lesson--oh, God, Utterson, what a lesson I have had." What is especially noteworthy in his utterance?

24. Who is Mr. Guest and what is his importance in the story? In what way is the letter, allegedly from Hyde, dangerously incriminating to Jekyll? At this time Utterson comes perilously close to the truth about his client and friend; what do you think is the reason he seems not to recognize it or even sense it? What does he suspect?

25. "The death of Sir Danvers was, to his (Utterson's) way of thinking, more than paid for by the disappearance of Hyde." Does this seem to you a strange attitude for a lawyer to have? How would you explain it?

26. With the disappearance of Hyde, Stevenson lightens the mystery, but only briefly, by bringing together Dr. Jekyll, Dr. Lanyon, and Mr. Utterson in a reestablished camaraderie reminiscent of times past. Then suddenly and inexplicably Jekyll's door is closed to his friends; he withdraws from their society and an even greater mystery envelops him. What has happened? What is Utterson's reaction?

27. Recall Stevenson's earlier description of Dr. Lanyon and contrast it now with the doctor's appearance and attitude on the occasion of Utterson's visit. What are Lanyon's feelings for Jekyll? What becomes of Lanyon? In what way do these events expand the aura of mystery around Dr. Jekyll, leaving Utterson disturbed and confused?

28. Unable to control his grave fears and apprehension about his master, Poole calls upon Utterson to enlist his help in solving the mystery which has reduced Jekyll's household to chaos. What is Poole's main concern? What is his major suspicion? Cite evidence to support each belief.

29. What single factor finally convinces Utterson and Poole to force down the door to Jekyll's laboratory and ascertain who is there?

30. What circumstances precipitate the death of Hyde? Do either Utterson or Poole suspect the actual situation? Why?

31. There is a surprising change in Dr. Jekyll's Will when it is found in the laboratory after the death of Hyde. What is the change and why does it so surprise Utterson?

32. What is the fundamental cause which leads Jekyll to believe in the duality in man's nature? Cite evidence from the Confession.

33. As Jekyll conjectures on the possibility--and, indeed, the likelihood of man's duality, to what intriguing and unscientific and immoral objectives is he led? What are the advantages to himself as he sees them?

34. Why do you think Stevenson made the person of Hyde so completely unlike Jekyll? Might it not have enhanced the story if he had been younger, more handsome and personally attractive? Might it not also have made his evil nature the more shocking?

35. What is your opinion of the novel? Does it satisfy as a "mystery"? What do you think of the subject matter? Of the possibility that man does actually have a dual nature?

SHORT STORIES

The Apple Tree

The Country of the Blind

A Double-Dyed Deceiver

A Mystery of Heroism

Literature Curriculum IV

Teacher Version

TEACHER VERSION

The Apple Tree

by John Galsworthy

INTRODUCTION

The selection of suitable short stories for the tenth grade program would appear to be an easy task when there is such a wealth of excellent material available, but this very abundance is an embarrassment and a hindrance. Weighing the merits of so many good pieces of literature and determining how well they fit into our spiral curriculum is a slow process. We chose "The Apple Tree" by John Galsworthy because it enables us to build upon what our students have already learned, while at the same time preparing them for what will come later.

"The Apple Tree" is longer than the average short story, indeed it is almost as long as some of the novels read in this curriculum: The Pearl, The Old Man and the Sea, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This will give the students an opportunity to examine what it is that determines its classification as a short story, when obviously it is not the length of the work. The romantic mood, and the touching theme of first love, will strike a sympathetic response in the vulnerable hearts of maturing tenth graders. They will also explore further the idea of appearance as opposed to reality that they first discussed in Roughing It, and in the Legends of King Arthur. In reading Julius Caesar this year the students will compare Plutarch's Caesar with Shakespeare's Caesar. Since Galsworthy comments upon social conventions, especially those of the English upper middle class, students will have a further opportunity to compare history with literature as it interprets life in society.

A further study of symbol, already dealt with quite extensively in The Old Man and the Sea in the ninth grade, should help the students appreciate the imaginative expression of "The Apple Tree."

The English social castes, so rigidly enforced before World War I, and still a powerful force at the outbreak of World War II, will be a concept alien to American youth. An understanding of the social structure is absolutely essential to an appreciation of the story, so some time spent on discussing this idea is a necessity. It will also prepare the way for a later study of Great Expectations by Charles Dickens.

THE AUTHOR

John Galsworthy was born at Coombe, Surrey, on August 14, 1867. He was educated at Harrow and New College, Oxford, and was called to the bar in 1890. However, he never followed the legal profession, but lived on a generous allowance from his wealthy father. He turned to a literary career, encouraged by Ada Galsworthy, the wife of his cousin Arthur.

At first glance, John Galsworthy appears to be a writer of social protest. He makes scathing comments about the English wealthy classes, and depicts the unhappiness and injustice arising out of their slavery to convention. But he was motivated by personal rather than social concerns. Having fallen in love with Ada, he lashed out at the society that ostracized them during the years they were furtive lovers, and later through the scandal of Ada's divorce from Arthur. Although he heaped ridicule upon the slavish conservatism of the upper middle class, as portrayed in his novel, The Man of Property, he himself never gave up any of his privileges as a member of that class. In later years, when he became a celebrated literary figure, and he and his wife were finally forgiven and socially accepted again, he ceased to be a rebel; and as he extended The Man of Property into the famous Forsyte Saga, he wrote with humor and compassion. His father was the model for old Jolyon Forsyte, and in the later writings Soames Forsyte became the mouthpiece for John Galsworthy himself. "The Apple Tree" was part of a collection of short stories published in 1925 entitled Caravan. Galsworthy is also known as a dramatist. In 1932 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

EXPLICATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER

It is suggested that you assign the story to be read in its entirety before beginning any class discussion. A piecemeal reading would detract from the yearning mood of spring and youthful restlessness which permeates the story and is the unifying element in this delicate and poetic tale. The motto drawn from the Hippolytus of Euripides, "the apple-tree, the singing, and the gold," strikes the dominant chord in harmony with the springtime mood of glorious sunlight, colorful flowers, and the fragrant perfume of delicate apple blossoms which stir the blood and quicken the pulse of the young couple so fatefully thrown together. The achievement of this mood is a poetic triumph, but Galsworthy has created a world remote from reality where the "Cyprian" is to blame for the actions of the hero! - a world in which mundane responsibilities do not exist. When Ashurst asks himself how he wronged Megan he "Cannot answer." A good class discussion might ensue by asking the students to answer the question for him. They will probably agree that he destroyed Megan because he never regarded her as a human being in the first place. She was simply a symbol of primitive natural instincts, a "creature" whose beauty was to be enjoyed along with the apple blossoms and the bird songs. "It had been exactly like looking at a flower or some other pretty sight in nature." (p. 8.Student Version).

Romantic love, by its very nature, is fed upon dreams. How long would the romance have lasted if Megan had gone with Frank to London? Would she still have killed herself? Is he to blame for her death? Was Megan's Celtic nature the cause of her emotional instability? This might be a good time to point out that Galsworthy was writing at the time of the Celtic revival, when a good many people were interested in the legends and folk lore that flourished on the west coast of England and in Wales, where the Celts had been driven centuries earlier by the invading Anglo Saxons. The superstition of the "bogle" might be better understood against a background of a highly imaginative and sensitive people who regard the forces of evil as very real, and therefore can pray, "From ghoulies and ghosties and long-leggety beasties, and things that go boomp in the night, good Lord deliver us." ("A Cornish Litany")

Ask the students to compare Stella with Megan. Class consciousness exists in English society to a degree incomprehensible to most Americans. Have the students find examples of Ashurst's condescending manner towards the country folk, and his acceptance of middle-class standards as exhibited by the Hallidays. There are many examples throughout the story. Here for your convenience are a few:

(p. 7) ". . . people found a certain lordliness in one who was often sublimely unconscious of them."

(p. 12) "Clods? With all the good will in the world, how impossible to get on terms with them."

(p. 12) ". . . the sound of sympathy that comes so readily from those who have an independent income."

(p. 17) "He felt how chivalrous he was, and superior to that clod Joe."

(p. 21) "A rush of jealousy, of contempt, and anger with this thick, loud breathing rustic got the better of Ashurst's self-possession."

(p. 28) "Sunday clothes always commonized village folk!"

(. 40) Megan - "like some little dog that has missed its master and does not know whether to run on, to run back, - where to run."

In this connection, it might be interesting to point out the Devonshire dialect, which an "s" sound like a "z", and which rolls the "r" so that "sir" sounds like "zurr". An "h" in front of a word is dropped completely so that "hope" becomes "ope," and the "oo" sound becomes "u" so that "good sounds like "gude." Compare this with the standard English and fashionable slang spoken by the Hallidays - "awfully decent," "old chap," "rotten," "beastly." Could Megan ever break through the social speech barrier? Could she ever be accepted by the Hallidays? Remind the students of their study of dialects in the language curriculum, and how social and economic conditions rather than grammatical reasons have given one dialect preference over others.

There are so many classical allusions that it might be worth the time spent to have the students seek them out and explain their significance. The introduction to Greek myths in the seventh grade should have given them some background, but they will probably need further refinement, especially the reference to Aphrodite as the "Cyprian," with its connotation of licentiousness. (p. 47). For your convenience, some other references are to be found on the following pages: p. 23, "fauns. . . . dryads. . . [and] nymphs"; p. 29 "Diana and attendant nymphs"; p. 35 "pagan night"; p. 41 "pagan emotion. . . faun. . . [and] nymph"; p. 3 "Pan."

Ask the students to read again the old man's account of Megan's death (p. 46). Some of them might remember "The Lady of Shalott" and notice the similarity. Was Megan mad? Is there conclusive evidence that she deliberately took her own life?

Point out how these literary allusions help to create an unreal atmosphere and contribute to the romantic mood. This could lead into a discussion of the author's use of symbolism, beginning with the apple-tree quotation from Murray's translation of the Hippolytus of Euripides. Not only the apple blossom, but all the detailed descriptions of Devonshire in the spring become symbolic of the fleeting nature of beauty. The queen wasp and the red bull mentioned on page 23 also might be interpreted symbolically in the contest of the Greek myths as female and male representatives of fertility, and of course the "bogle" casts a constant shadow across the romance, for romantic love also is a fleeting thing. Spring itself is symbolic of young love. Ashurst's swim, when he toys with the idea of drowning, might be regarded as a symbolic act to rid himself of the haunting presence of Megan.

The author often creates his mood through the use of simile, metaphor and personification. Ask the students to find examples, and discuss their contribution to the over-all effect. A few examples you might use for discussion are listed here:

(p. 24) ". . . the busy chatter of the little trout stream, whereon the moon was flinging glances through the bars of her tree-prison."

(p. 21) "at that adoring look he felt his nerves quiver, just as if he had seen a moth scorching its wings."

(p. 15) ". . . a lark, from very high, dripped its beads of song."

Throughout the story there are foreshadowings that the romance will be short-lived. In the very first section Galsworthy tells us "life no doubt had moments with that quality of beauty, of unbidden flying rapture, but the trouble was they lasted no longer than the span of a cloud's flight over the sun; impossible to keep them with you, as Art caught beauty and held it fast" (p. 3). For this he seems to blame civilization. "No getting out of it - a maladjusted animal, civilized man." The Hallidays represent the stolid British middle class to whose customs and opinions individual needs must be sacrificed. Megan is their victim.

The idea of death keeps intruding, beginning with the first mention of the "bogle" (p. 13) who allegedly appeared the night before Megan's uncle died. The bogle reappears from time to time foreshadowing Megan's death. Ask the students to find other references where death casts a shadow, including Megan's own words "I shall die if I cannot be with you" (p. 25). Explain how the constrast heightens the mood of love and life, as well as the irony of it.

There are other instances of irony. Ashurst regards himself as chivalrous. Mention is made of this typically middle-class attitude several times (pp. 26, 40, 42). Have the students find other illustrations and discuss with them how this attitude may have helped destroy Megan, for while admitting the reality of the world the Hallidays represent, which of course was also Ashurst's world, he denied the reality of Megan because she did not fit into that world. Does acceptance of society's code absolve one from individual responsibility? Can one blame the power of the "Cyprian" to excuse one's lack of restraint? Is romantic love itself a reality, or does it exist only in the imagination? The students might recall Mark Twain's experiences in Roughing It when he found his dream of freedom in the West shattered by the reality of a lawless existence.

"The Apple Tree" despite its length is a short story because it focuses upon a single impression, with every detail contributing to the atmosphere of romantic love. All irrelevant material is excluded, and there is no character development. Ashurst is drawn a little less sketchily than the others, who are merely stock types, but he still shows no growth.

Although students may discuss Subject, Form, and Point of View under separate headings, they should be able to see how they fuse in this story to create a unity. Point of view is a concept that has gradually expanded for these students, so that by now they should be able to see that it includes the author's own philosophy of life, which in this case shows through very clearly in "The Apple Tree." His tendency to personify inanimate objects, for example, is for the purpose of showing how man and his environment react upon each other. The irony with which he satirizes the wealthy middle-class projects his own feelings of frustration at the fixity of the social system and its slavery to convention. He overflows with sympathy for the poor, whom he depicts in their own setting but in a sentimental fashion, seeing them as victims of the social castes. This attitude has controlled both the material he has selected for his story, or the abstract subjects, and his method of presenting it, or the form it has taken.

No writer is perfect. There are weaknesses in this story; but most students will appreaciate the artistry with which Galsworthy has used words to create a mood, and it will be a strange youth indeed who does not find himself moved by the emotional impact of the mood.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. VOCABULARY.

If there are any words you cannot be sure of from the context, look up the meaning in the dictionary. Especially be sure you understand the following:

mottled (p. 2)
clammy sepulchre (p. 2)
scrupulous (p. 3)
inebriety (p. 3)
poultice (p. 10)
chivalry (p. 11)
the laughter of yaffles (p. 17)
cynical (p. 18)
alacrity (p. 19)
disconsolately (p. 27)
orthodox (p. 39)
landau (p. 40)

2. "The Apple Tree" is much longer than the average short story; in fact some of the novels you have read are not much longer. Give at least three reasons for its classification as a short story rather than a novel.

3. Galsworthy uses the "flash-back technique" to tell his story. Why do you think he chose this method? What is the effect of looking at the action from the distance of a quarter of a century?

4. Galsworthy has established the mood for the story in the introduction. Man, he indicates, is a restless creature, always seeking happiness, but never able to capture it. How has he suggested the fleeting nature of romance? Why is the countryside in spring a suitable setting for the story?

5. List the following incidents in the order in which they occurred.
(6) Ashurst goes to Torquay to buy clothes for Megan.
(2) Garton returns to London.
(5) Megan sees a bogle.
(10) Ashurst marries Stella.
(1) Ashurst and Garton meet Megan.
(7) Ashurst meets his old friend Halliday.
(3) Megan and Mrs. Narracombe put a poultice on Ashurst's knee.
(9) Ashurst sees Megan looking for him in Torquay.
(4) Ashurst kisses Megan in the apple orchard.
(8) Ashurst saves Halliday from drowning.

6. Which of the above incidents do you think is the climax of the story? Why?

7. Compare the Hallidays with the Narracombes. Which group did Ashurst fit in with best? Why?

8. Compare Stella with Megan. Do you think Ashurst could have been happy with Megan? Could Megan have been happy with Ashurst? Give your reasons.

9. What kind of man was Frank Ashurst? Find evidence in the text for your comments. At the end of the story, when he learned of Megan's death, Frank asked himself "What did I do that was wrong?" Can you answer the question?

10. What foreshadowings do you find in the story that point to tragedy for Megan?

11. In sustaining the romantic mood, Galsworthy has made prodigal use of imagery, simile, metaphor, and personification. Find examples of these and be prepared to discuss their effectiveness in class.

12. In literature, the connotation of a word is often more important than its exact meaning. Find words the author has used that suggest many ideas because of the things the reader will associate with them. For instance, what does "pagan" suggest to you in the passage ". . . the suspense and beauty of that pagan night" (p. 35)? Find other examples.

13. Why do you think the author has made so many references to the classical Greek myths? Find as many examples as you can and discuss their significance.

14. Closely connected with ideas suggested by connotation is the author's use of symbolism. You will remember from previous discussions that a symbol is something that stands for more than itself in the same way that the stars and stripes represent our country. In what way is the apple blossom a symbol? Can you find other examples?

15. Last year when you read Roughing It you discussed the idea of how dreams, our imagination of what things will be like, are never borne out by reality. Mark Twain dreamed of the freedom of the West, but found instead lawlessness, crime, and hardship. In this story, Ashurst indicates that his marriage to Stella had lacked "the apple tree, the singing, and the gold." The implication is that life with Megan would have been different. Would it? Does romantic love exist only in the imagination? Can it ever be real? Give reasons for your opinions.

16. What subjects does Galsworthy write about in this story? Do any of the ideas reflect the author's own point of view? Has he kept himself apart from the narrative? Do you feel he is trying to make any comments about life as he sees it? Give illustrations from the story.

17. What do you feel was the author's purpose in writing this story? How has this purpose determined the form of the work? What things has he stressed, and what has he deliberately omitted?

18. At what point in the story were you sure Ashurst would never return to Megan? How did you know?

19. Halliday almost drowns, and Ashurst saves him. Later Frank swims out with the idea of drowning, but chooses to live. Finally Megan drowns herself. Why do you think the author repeated this idea?

20. What is Frank's attitude towards Megan and the other farm people? Why do you think he feels this way? Notice the speech of the Devonshire people as compared with that of the Hallidays. How else do they differ? Would these differences of social class hinder the success of a marriage?

21. Is there any conflict in this story? Can you identify it?

22. Read Jim's description of the bogle (pp. 21-22). What is the significance of this incident? When was the bogle first mentioned? What is its purpose in the story?

23. Read the description of the farm kitchen (p. 8). Note the concrete detail used to create reality. Compare this with the description of the apple orchard by moonlight (p. 24). How does the language differ from the first description to create a mood of unreality?

24. An author's attitude is often discernible through the tone of his writing. For instance when the lame old man tells Ashurst about the bad knee he has had for ten years, there appears this sentence: "Ashurst made the sound of sympathy that comes so readily from those who have an independent income." What does this tell you about the author? Can you find other instances of irony?

25. Throughout the story, the author suggests the presence of unseen spirits. For example, on page 24 describing the apple blossoms by moonlight he says, "He had the oddest feeling of actual companionship, as if a million white moths or spirits had floated in and settled between dark sky and darker ground." At the end of the story he again attributes power to the forces of nature. "Spring, with its rush of passion, its flowers and song - the spring in his heart and Megan's! Was it just Love seeking a victim!"

Are we really at the mercy of outside powers, or was Ashurst finding excuses because he could not blame himself for Megan's death? Are we all the victims of circumstances, or do we choose our own destinies?

SUGGESTED EXERCISES

1. State in one or two sentences the main idea of the story.

2. Look back through the story and notice how much of it is dialogue. What is the advantage of this type of writing? Look especially at the conversation between Megan and Frank concerning the bogle (p. 14). Having embarrassed Megan, after she leaves the room, the author comments, "It was as if he had hacked with his thick boots at a clump of bluebells. Why had he said such a silly thing?"

Have you ever hurt or embarrassed someone, so that you could kick yourself afterwards? Using conversation, write a page or two about the incident.

3. Read again the description of the mother-goose and her six goslings (p. 10). Note the details that bring the scene to life. Write a few paragraphs describing something you have enjoyed watching - your dog chasing a squirrel, a bird taking a bath in a puddle, kittens playing together, for example.

4. You have come to know Frank Ashurst rather well through reading this story. What kind of person do you think he is? Write a character study of Ashurst as he appears to you, referring to the text to substantiate your opinions.

5. Describe Frank Ashurst as he might appear to the following people: Megan, Mrs. Narracombe, Jim Halliday. Would they all see him the same way? Account for this. Write at least one full paragraph for each viewpoint.

"The Country of the Blind"

by H. G. Wells

This story, by one of England's masters of the suspense tale, is an intriguing and provocative story about a man who inadvertently discovers some facts about human nature.

The story is set in the Andes in Ecuador. Wells gives his reader an early sense of location, dwelling at some length on the legend of the lost valley, arousing on one hand a sense of anticipation and at the same time establishing a plausible background. The valley, settled by some hardy Peruvians, is walled off from the rest of the world by a gigantic earthquake. One of the inhabitants, who has gone to obtain help in the fight against a strange malady, tells of the valley. The story becomes a legend in the succeeding years, a legend of a "Country of the Blind", where the inhabitants have been blinded by some hereditary illness. (This portion of the tale is hardly incredible. Only recently news stories have called our attention to a large area in the interior of Mexico where the natives are almost all blind as a result of the untreated bite of a certain fly.)

Wells needs to establish that these people have lost all contact with the world of sight. We are told that fifteen generations have passed since the last of the "seeing" has died. Into this limited, curiously self-sufficient and satisfying world, the mountain climber Nunez drops, quite literally, by accident.

The avenues of communication between the two are totally blocked, for the unseeing cannot understand the world of sight. With telling irony Wells speaks of the refusal to accept the idea of a world other than their own. The blind consider such an idea heresy and decide that Nunez, who moves clumsily in the world of the blind, is hardly human. They do not like the idea of Medina-sarote marrying this strange person and possibly corrupting the race.

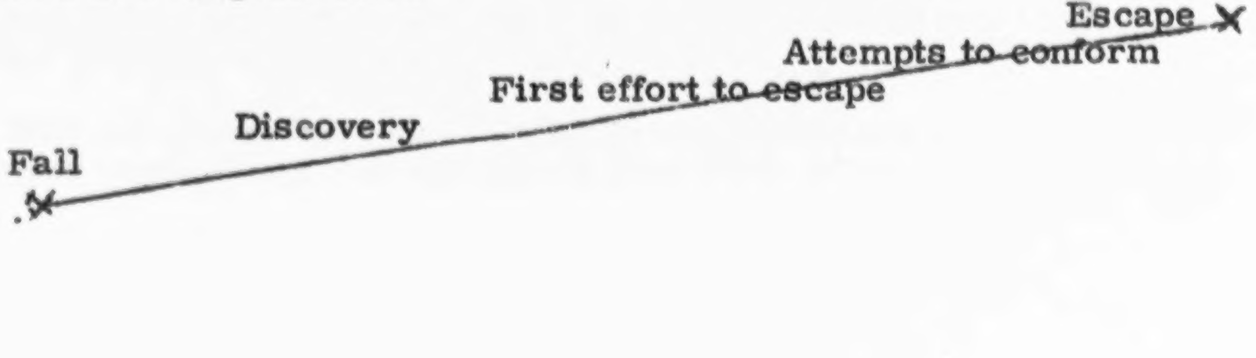
You can handle the various themes to suit the responsiveness of your class, of course. There is no doubt that Wells is commenting with some bitterness on religion, education, and tolerance.

Perhaps the most ironic points of the story involve Nunez, who almost allows himself to be blinded in order to be accepted--and because he cannot, he finds, strike back at the blind. "He began to realize that you cannot even fight happily with creatures who stand upon a different mental basis with yourself." The difficulty of fighting prejudice, bias, and untruth is doubly hard, not only because there is no common meeting ground of the opponents, but also because the thinking man--or "seeing" man--does feel pity; his understanding brings him tolerance, and sometimes because of it, defeat.

It is perhaps noteworthy that Nunez makes good his escape from the valley only when he sees the desire of the men to destroy sight as a sin. Not even for love, he decides, is he willing to destroy his own freedom, symbolized by his ability to see.

How many "Countries of the Blind" exist today in our own turbulent and changing society! Many "ordered" little realms with "smooth ceilings" exist, and the ceiling over these worlds effectively shuts out new ideas.

But whether or not the class undertakes a discussion, it will be profitable to have them look closely at the form of this story. Pay particular attention to the beginning. Just how does Wells prepare us for this story? Why is so much space devoted to location and background? How is the tale made believable? How is suspense maintained? Out of such a discussion can grow an understanding of the structure of this story. From the initial incident the story moves with clear-cut exactness to a conclusion. It might be expressed in a diagram thus:



The point of view is third person, although it is Wells we hear speaking as the story opens. We "see" the story largely through the eyes of the author. It is interesting to observe the point of view of the sightless and the seeing worlds. In fact, it is upon the reader's sensitivity to this latter point that the meaning of the story must rest. It will be worthwhile to question the students closely here. How does Nunez see these people? Is he not arrogant in his superiority? What could Wells be saying here? How do these sightless people respond to Nunez? Why can they not understand his world? Finally, the student should consider his own point of view. Does he see both sides? What is his attitude?

The subject, to return to the opening remarks, is clearly two-fold. It is about the Andes, dangerous ledges, cold and lonely wastes. It is about adventure, danger, excitement, and suspense. Yet it is just as surely a story concerned with freedom, with what freedom is, how it can be lost and how it can be recovered. It is clearly concerned with man's talent at building "ceilings" to limit creativity and thought and with his sometimes grotesque inability to understand a view different from his own.

It is this two-fold subject that makes "The Country of the Blind" an exciting story to read and a satisfying one to teach.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Can you explain the significance of the first three paragraphs? Just what information do they include? Is it necessary? In what way does it prepare us for what is to follow?

2. The fourth paragraph contains the "beginning" of the action. What are we told here about the hero? How much more do we know about him when the story closes?

3. Is the accident that precipitates the story credible? In what way?

4. Find the description of the valley. In what way did the valley seem strange to Nunez?

5. Why do you think Wells inserted the old proverb about the one-eyed man? Does this tale prove it to be true or false? Explain.

6. How did the blind people regard Nunez? Is it fair to say that neither understood the other? Explain.

7. Read the sentences beginning "Blind men of genius. . ." and concluding with ". . . New and saner explanations." Is this irony? Explain. Find other examples of irony.

8. Why did Nunez have such difficulty explaining sight to these people? Can you think of any way that would have been more effective?

9. First Nunez tried persuasion. Then he used force. How did the latter method succeed?

10. When did Nunez's smugness give way to despair?

11. Why did Nunez return after his first effort to escape?

12. What was demanded of him? Why were these demands made?

13. Why did Yacob and the others dislike the idea of Nunez marrying Medina-sarote?

14. What did the doctor conclude caused Nunez to be different?

15. The doctor said that Nunez would be an admirable citizen and "sane" once his eyes were removed. What irony do you see here?

16. Do you think that Wells feels a good citizen should conform to everything about him and be agreeable? How do you know what the author thinks?

17. Read the four one-sentence paragraphs near the end of the story. What purpose do they serve?

18. Is the valley symbolical, do you think? If so, of what? Why is Nunez content to lie on the mountains, not even looking at the beauty of the night? What do you think the mountain symbolizes?

19. Read the last two paragraphs again. Notice the visual imagery. Has this been noticeable before? Can you explain this?

WRITING EXERCISES

1. Have you ever had difficulty communicating an idea to someone? If you have one point of view toward a controversial subject and your friend another, why is it important for you to "see" (not necessarily agree with) his point of view? Do you know people who are blind to any ideas other than their own? Explain in a paragraph why it is important for people to be able to see other views than their own.

2. In order to see for yourself the different worlds Nunez and the blind men "saw," describe the valley as it appeared to Nunez and then describe it as it seemed to the inhabitants. Remember to use concrete details and to be specific.

3. Try to visualize the little nation, the "Country of the Blind." Make a map showing the village, the farmland, the meadows, and the surrounding mountains. Then, using your map as a guide, write a paragraph describing the valley. In your Rhetoric Units last year, you learned to use certain organizing principles in your writing. Which would be most effective here?

4. When he discovered the valley, Nunez recalled the saying, "In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King." Think this statement over. What do you think it implies? Write a paragraph explaining what you think this means.

A DOUBLE-DYED DECEIVER

by O. Henry

INTRODUCTION

The problem of finding suitable selections for reluctant readers is a familiar one for most teachers. We have chosen this story by O. Henry because we believe the lively plot will sustain the interest of even the very slow readers, and so minimize any difficulties presented by the vocabulary.

Not all of the questions will be suitable for low track students, however, and you will have to decide how far your students will be able to go. Better students will profit from the more detailed study, and they should be encouraged to compare this story that relies so heavily on plot manipulation with other stories they have read, and so arrive at some kind of value judgment about its literary worth.

The story should probably be read straight through; any vocabulary difficulties should be cleared up before beginning a class discussion. You will probably want to be sure the students understand the significance of the title. With slower students, it might be a good idea to have someone give a brief synopsis of the plot to be sure they have grasped all the important incidents before you begin to talk about the ideas raised by the study questions.

Since the questions themselves and the brief answers given here probably cover most of the points you will want to explore, no further explication is included for this story.

THE AUTHOR

William Sidney Porter, who became celebrated as a short story writer using the pen name of O. Henry, was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1862. There he worked as a drug store clerk until he moved to Texas. It was while he was employed as a bank teller in Austin that he was charged with embezzlement and fled to Central America. His wife's illness caused him to return, and in 1897 he was convicted and sentenced to three years in the Federal Penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio. While in prison he began writing short stories under the name of O. Henry. The last ten years of his life were spent in New York where he continued to write stories at the rate of two a month, and sometimes more. "A Double-Dyed Deceiver" is from a collection called Roads of Destiny, published during this period of his life.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you suppose that O. Henry did not reveal until the end ~~of the~~ story that the man the Kid had killed in Laredo was the Urique heir? Is there any clue earlier in the story that might have led you to this conclusion? If this piece of information had been put in the beginning, would the story have been as interesting? --The surprise at the end of the story makes a powerful impression upon the reader. Students

will probably agree that had they known in advance the identity of the Kid's victim, the end of the story would not have been a surprise and therefore would have lost its effectiveness.
Some students may have seen a clue in the sentence following Thacker's description of the tattoo mark on young Urique's hand. "The Kid raised his left hand slowly and gazed at it curiously." This may have raised the question in their minds, but it is certainly not conclusive.

2. Is the Kid's change of heart at the end of the story convincing? Are you convinced of his concern for his "mother" that makes him stay on in the role of Francisco Urique? Is there a possibility that he had planned in advance to maintain his new identity? Can you find evidence in the story to support your opinion? --Of course we cannot be sure, but it seems highly probable that the Kid intended all along to make a permanent place for himself with the Uriques. The fact that he did not confide in Thacker at the time the tattoo was first mentioned leads us to suppose he had a reason for keeping this knowledge to himself. All the evidence in the story would indicate the Kid is not a person to consider other people, so the motivation for his change of heart is weak. He undoubtedly enjoyed his new position and took delight in Thacker's helpless frustration. However, a good case could be made from his speech to Thacker telling how he must protect Señora Urique from further hurt, to support the opposing view that he is a redeemed character. Students should be encouraged to discuss this problem.

3. How many examples of coincidence can you find in the story? Are the coincidences plausible? What part do they play in shaping the story? --This is a good opportunity to let the students recognize O. Henry's dependence upon plot manipulation to achieve results. The action does not consistently grow out of the choices of his characters, but depends heavily upon coincidence. The most obvious coincidence placed the Kid in the house of the man he had killed. It was another coincidence that he arrived in Corpus Christi just in time to sail on the ship that took him to Buenas Tierras. It was a coincidence that the Kid resembled the slain man in age and appearance, and also that he spoke fluent Spanish. It was coincidence that brought him to the office of a corrupt official on the lookout for someone just like the Kid, and who also by coincidence knew the art of tattooing.

4. What do you know about the Kid? Do you follow his story with any emotion? Why or why not? Is this deliberate on the part of the author, or is it a weakness in the story? --We know little about the Kid except that he was a typical "juvenile delinquent" of his day. Forced at an early age to fend for himself, he arrived at a precocious wisdom of the ways of the world. He was quick with a gun and boasted an unsavory reputation along the Rio Grande border. We do not become emotionally involved with him because the author never reveals him as a living person, but rather tells his story in the detached and impersonal manner of the old balladeers. He neither sympathizes nor passes judgment, but simply relates the events as they happen.

5. Most literary works have subjects that can be discussed on various levels, apart from the story line itself. The ideas, or abstract subjects,

are usually about important aspects of human existence. Are there any such ideas conveyed through this story? If so, do they seem significant to you? --The story deals with flight from justice and with deception, but these ideas seem to lose their significance because justice does not triumph and the deception is allowed to succeed. This goes against our deepest human instincts. While we do not feel sorry for Thacker when he is double-crossed, we are a little uneasy about the Kid getting away with murder at the expense of the Urique family. Some of the students may feel that his changed motives redeem the situation, and a good class discussion might arise from this question. Must a man always pay for his sins?

6. Much of the story is told through dialogue. What do the Kid's conversations with both Captain Boone and Thacker reveal about all three characters? What else does O. Henry accomplish through this method of story telling? --Dialogue helps to make the story more plausible. The characters speak like real people, so we accept them more readily as true to life, even though they are merely conventional types or stock characters. The conversation also serves to inform the reader of plans and arrangements quickly and concisely, without wasting words on lengthy descriptions and explanations.

7. Look again at the beginning of the story. Compare the style of this language with the conversations you have just discussed. Does it seem appropriate to the subject of the story? Now that you know how the story ends, can you see any reason for O. Henry to adopt this tone in the beginning? Does it in any way reveal the author's attitude toward his subject? --In the opening paragraph of his story, O. Henry uses language much too flowery and pompous to suit his subject. It is every bit as false and artificial as the Kid's motives when he first assumes the identity of Francisco Urique. The author seems to be warning the reader not to be deceived by appearances, which often serve only to conceal the reality.

8. Why does the author suddenly jump from the Kid boarding the ship to his calling on Thacker in his office, without any transition whatsoever? Later in the story, a whole month elapses between the ending of one paragraph and the beginning of the next. Does this remind you of any other type of literature you have studied? How does this technique contribute to the effect the author is trying to produce? --Since the author omits everything not directly connected with the action of his story, he has simply ignored the journey as well as the month spent by the Kid in the Urique household before the end of the story. But these are abrupt omissions, not handled with the artistry of many other short story writers. O. Henry's method rather resembles melodrama, with its exaggerated focus upon the plot, which keeps the reader caught up in the action and discourages him from asking questions or passing judgments, while the author manipulates his story toward the surprise ending.

9. Which of the characters appear to be types or stock characters? What details has O. Henry used to suggest this impression? --Captain Boone, with his talk of "capstanfooted lubbers" is a typical tobacco-chewing, profane old salt. Thacker is the standard type of alcoholic petty government official, placed where he can do least harm, through either bun-

gling or dishonesty. Señor Urique is simply a shadow character, "a tall man with a white moustache." His wife is the conventional Spanish beauty, now middle-aged and sad, dressed in black like the melodrama heroine wronged by the villain. The Kid himself is a stock character, the card-playing, saloon-haunting drifter, eager for a fight and quick on the draw.

10. Has the author sentimentalized the character of Señora Urique? (Better look this word up in your dictionary.) How does this affect your attitude to the deception the Kid uses on her? --The gay Señora Urique, happily dressed in white lace and ribbons, is no more convincing a character than her former sad self, dressed in deep mourning. The account of her tears and attentions, told by the Kid, is sheer melodrama. It is difficult to feel pity for a shadow.

11. Does the title prepare you for the outcome of the story? Is the ending a satisfying one? Give reasons for your answers. --The title does give a clue to the ending of the story, but it is not necessarily a satisfying outcome, for the reasons discussed in question 5.

12. What are the major conflicts of the story? How are they used to build suspense? --Suspense is built early in the story when the Kid is being pursued by friends of his victim, and the reader is not sure he will make good his escape. The major conflict of course exists between Thacker and the Kid, even though for a while they appear to be aligned together against the unsuspecting Uriques. Suspense is heightened at the end when the action is fast. Thacker has admitted defeat, the Urique carriage is heard outside, and the Kid reveals that he has taken the place of the man he killed--all in the last half of the page!

13. Explain the allusion to the Prodigal Son. Why is it ironic used in this story? What other examples of irony can you find? --Most students will be familiar with the biblical parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11). They should be able to appreciate the irony of the usurper, deliberately fleecing the deceived parents, quite unlike the repentant son in the bible story who asks only to be given a servant's position. The irony of Señora Urique mothering her son's murderer will surely be mentioned by the students, and some may see irony in the Kid's assuming the identity of a despised "greaser" so insignificant that shooting one doesn't even count along the border. There is also irony in the Kid's changed motives at the end, assuming he is sincere in his desire to spare his "mother" further heartache.

14. What impression does this story leave you with? What popular form of modern entertainment does it resemble? Is it close to real life? Do you think it was intended to be? --Students will probably recognize the familiar pattern of the TV Western in this story. It is escape literature, unrealistic, and not at all involved with the issues of real life. The twist at the end probably left the strongest impression, for after all it was designed to be entertaining.

15. How many instances of deception can you find in the story? Is the Kid the only deceiver? --By openly going to the station and boarding the

train, then quietly slipping off and stealing a horse, the Kid began his career of deception. Next he deceived Thacker by letting him assume they were partners in a plan to rob the Uriques. Finally he deceived the Uriques by pretending to be their long-lost son. However, he practiced his deception with a difference at the end of the story, if we accept at face value his change of heart concerning Señora Urique.

Thacker too is guilty of deception. By tattooing the Urique family crest on the back of the Kid's hand, and then writing an untruthful letter to Señor Urique, he further complicates the web of falsehood.

"A Mystery of Heroism"

by Stephen Crane

INTRODUCTION

In selecting "A Mystery of Heroism" to be included in the tenth grade short story unit, we feel we have found a short story, simple in style, that will appeal to slower readers, while at the same time it is significant enough to challenge perceptive minds.

The questions are grouped mainly around the concepts of Subject, Form, and Point of View, but not all students will be able to answer every question, and you will need to extract what is useful for your particular class.

THE AUTHOR

The fourteenth child of a methodist minister, Stephen Crane was born in 1871, six years after the end of the Civil War. Although he had never seen war when he wrote his best known novel, The Red Badge of Courage, it is a realistic reproduction of a Civil War battle, and a young man's psychological response to combat. It won immediate acclaim, and established his reputation on both sides of the Atlantic.

His formal education, which included brief studies at Lafayette College and Syracuse University, was less influential upon his writing career than the time he spent as a journalist in New York. This was the training that taught him to see and feel raw humanity so vividly that he was later able to reproduce it graphically in his impressionistic style.

Interested in the psychology of combat, he went first to Greece and then to Cuba as a war correspondent. On one of these voyages his ship sank in sight of land; later he used this experience to write his famous short story "The Open Boat."

Something of a rebel, he married a woman of questionable repute, and spent the last years of his short life in England. He was neglectful of his health, and often even careless about his safety. He died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-nine.

Although he was a prolific writer, only a few of Crane's stories are anthologized today; "The Open Boat," "The Blue Hotel," and "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" being the ones most frequently used. In spite of his penchant for metaphor, there is a simplicity in his style that is later echoed by Hemingway, and that gives his writing a modern tone. The contrived effect for which Poe strove is entirely missing in Crane. His stories are more often what Henry James called a "situation revealed," with greater emphasis upon character development and human motives, often ironically understated.

"A Mystery of Heroism" was the most successful of the stories collected under the title "The Little Regiment," and first published in 1896.

Suggestions for Teaching the Story

"A Mystery of Heroism" relates an incident of the Civil War. It is a typical Crane story which exposes the inner crisis of a man facing death. The conflict lies in the struggle between the man's need to maintain dignity and at least the outward appearance of courage, and the external circumstances of chance that force action upon him. In some respects it is a capsule version of the same theme as that developed in The Red Badge of Courage.

Allow the students time to read the story all the way through before beginning any class discussion. It may be necessary to explain a few terms that are not commonly used today. Students may not know, for instance, that the "swing" team was the middle pair of horses in a team of six, or that caissons were wagons for transporting ammunition.

Just how you will go about discussing the story will depend largely upon the class, and their response to it. The following questions, together with possible answers, are given for your convenience to suggest possible avenues of approach. They do not represent an exhaustive treatment of the story, but it is hoped that they may serve as a springboard for a fruitful discussion and analysis.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Does the story follow the typical narrative pattern of beginning, middle, and end? What are the main events in the order in which they happened? Do these events by themselves provide the main interest of the story? Why or why not? - The story does not follow a typical chronological pattern. Crane presents us with an impression of the battlefield by focusing his descriptive powers upon detail after detail, rather like a movie camera switching rapidly from scene to scene, concentrating an experience for the benefit of an audience. As he is presented for the first time, Collins is merely one of the details, a nondescript private wishing he had a drink of water. The scene shifts quickly back to the meadow, then to the wounded artillery officer, over to the ruined house, and back to the stricken artillery unit. It is against this background that we are asked to view the action--the men laughing at Collins and egging him on to get the water, Collins being goaded into action, getting permission from the officer, walking across the meadow with the men's canteens, filling the bucket, and running clumsily back

with the water. The main interest in the story, however, lies not in the action itself, but in the psychological revelation of Collins's reaction to his circumstances, and the illumination of the nature of heroism.

2. On the surface level, the story is about a soldier who goes after some water in the middle of a battle field. What is the subject on a deeper level? - Heroism, of course, is the obvious idea developed through the story, but students may see a more general underlying theme. The meaning of life itself may be held up for examination. How significant are the choices a man makes in the face of external circumstance beyond his control, even including his own inherited nature?

3. Why does Collins go after the water? Is his action entirely voluntary, or do circumstances beyond his control force him into it? - Crane does not tell us exactly why Collins risks his life for water. In fact Collins himself seems to be surprised by his own action. Certainly the jeering of his comrades precipitated it, since his pride compelled him to prove he was not afraid. But why should he prove it under those conditions? To fear is human, and every man has known fear. Bravado compelled him to ask permission from the officer, but perhaps he hoped permission would be denied, thus saving face for him. Permission having been granted, he seemed powerless to change his mind. "It seemed to him supernaturally strange that he had allowed his mind to maneuver his body into such a situation." The class might discuss the power of other people's opinions over our decisions, and the extent to which we should allow them to influence us.

4. Have you ever known anyone like Fred Collins? Does he strike you as being a real person? Read again Crane's description of Collins's feelings as he crossed the battle field. Is it plausible? You may remember Saint-Exupéry made a similar discovery when he found he was quite without emotion as he battled the storm in his plane. Talking about the experience afterwards, in "The Elements" from Wind, Sand and Stars, he said:

> "There is nothing dramatic in the world, nothing pathetic, except in human relations."

In other words, horror is not present while something happens; it can only be looked at with horror afterwards. Why do you think terror struck Collins as he filled the water canteen? - Some students may have had an experience they would be willing to relate when at the time they felt nothing--a close escape from injury or death in a car accident, for example. They will probably agree that Collins's reaction is a typically human one. Fear struck him as he filled the bucket because he had time to reflect upon the significance of what he had done, and a growing realization dawned upon him that he might not make it back to the relative safety of the hill. Although we know nothing about Collins or his background, this true-to-life revelation of his feelings in the face of danger makes us accept him as a plausible character.

5. Was Collins really a hero, or was his action foolish? Is there any element of true heroism in his action? What is the difference between courage and foolhardiness? - There will very likely be differences of opinion about the meaning of heroism. Most of the class will probably

agree that returning to the dying officer and giving him a drink was truly heroic, even though the man died, because in spite of his fear he tried to help a human being in need. But risking his life for a drink of water when there was no danger of dying from thirst was foolhardy rather than brave. Motives and value judgments must be examined in distinguishing heroism from bravado.

6. Why is heroism a mystery? Discuss the appropriateness of the title in the light of the story. How does it imply the problem of appearance and reality as it is present in this story? - Crane's story seems to suggest that true heroism cannot be judged by external appearance. The circumstances which compel Collins to cross under fire to the well and the clumsy panic with which he runs back to his comrades explain away the apparent heroism of his act. The spilled water at the end destroys all meaning for the act. But the mystery lies deeper than this. Demented by fear, Collins runs past the dying artillery officer who asks for a drink. "I can't!" he screams, but a moment later he turns and clumsily gives him a drink. He is still gripped by fear. "Collins tried to hold the bucket steadily, but his shaking hands caused the water to splash all over the face of the dying man." Every detail of the incident exposes the mystery of heroism. The reader is confronted with it realistically and he knows that this is Collins's moment of redemption. The fact that the officer dies makes no difference. Reality lies in the spiritual quality of the act. The title has succinctly stated the paradox, and the story has illuminated it.

7. Why did the men goad Collins into going for the water? Do you think they really expected him to do it? What was their reaction when he went? How did they greet his return? Do you think they regarded him as a hero? - The men of the company were idly passing the time by joshing Collins about his thirst and finding amusement in his defensive reaction to their taunts and jeers. They certainly never expected him to go. "Their astonishment found vent in strange repetitions. 'Are yeh sure a-goin?' they demanded again and again." Upon his return they received him in the same spirit they might welcome a football hero. "The regiment gave him a welcoming roar. The grimed faces were wrinkled in laughter." It was not the kind of welcome they would have given him had his errand been to rescue a wounded comrade. True heroism they would have recognized solemnly. This trivial daring was regarded lightly.

8. Read again the passage beginning on p. 91 where the dying artillery officer asks Collins for a drink of water. Why did he suppress the groans, and calmly ask for a drink? Was this courage? Why do you think the author put the episode into the story at this point? - Even in his death agony the officer was aware of his duty to set an example for the men. Conquering his pain to ask quietly for a drink of water did show courage, the kind that is habitual, and served to heighten by contrast the undignified flight of Collins gripped by fear. It was probably the influence of this quiet courage that compelled Collins to turn back, ashamed of his own lack of control. Outside circumstances once again dominated his action. Is this part of the mystery?

9. In a moment of crisis, details that may be quite irrelevant to what is

happening sometimes make a vivid impression upon us. The seeming unreality of the situation is heightened by an awareness of the actual reality of these things. Crane mentions the white legs of the gunners, for example. What other details can you find used by the author to create the feeling of emergency? How are the impressions often made more vivid by the use of simile and metaphor? Find and comment upon a few that you feel to be most effective. - A heightened awareness of his surroundings is suggested by Collins noting the chimney bricks and the door on one hinge as he appraoches the ruined house, and the wheel-ruts and hoofprints as he returns with the water. Through the use of metaphor and simile, the author creates dramatic images that produce a realistic setting. There are many examples the students might quote. A few are listed here for your convenience:

Simile
"A color sergeant fell flat with his flag as if he had slipped on ice."
". . . he made a mad rush for the house which he viewed as a man submerged to the neck in a boiling surf might view the shore."
"Collins ran in the manner of a farmer chased out of a dairy by a bull."
"The officer was as a man gone in drink. His arm bent like a twig. His head drooped as if his neck were of willow."

Metaphor
"He could see nothing but flying arrows, flaming red."
". . . the earthquake explosions drove him insane"
"The sky was full of fiends who directed all their wild rage at his head."
"practical angels of death"

10. Find examples in the story that illustrate how Crane has sometimes used contrast to heighten the effect of the impression he wishes to create. - We have already, in question 8, discussed the contrast between the panic of Collins and the calm courage of the dying artillery officer. Another example the students might mention is the artillery lieutenant whose eyes "sparkled like those of an insane man," galloping at high speed for orders to withdraw. In the next paragraph he is contrasted with the "fat major, standing carelessly with his sword held horizontally behind him and with his legs far apart", laughing at the receding horseman.

Earlier in the story, the paragraph describing the violent and sudden death of the bugler is heightened by contrast with a description, in the next paragraph, of the "fair little meadow which spread at their feet. Its long grass was rippling gently in a breeze."

11. Do you find any irony in the way the story ends? Might the title itself be ironic? Are there other touches of irony in the story? Does the ironic tone give you a clue to the author's Point of View? - The story ends with an anti-climax. That Collins risked his life for nothing will surely strike the students as ironic. Even the water he gave the dying officer was wasted, since he died anyway. And yet, ironically, this act had significance. Herein lies the mystery, exposed yet not explained.

The choice of Collins himself as the hero is ironic. Crane has illuminated the problem of heroism through the actions of a non-hero.

Collins is a nondescript, faceless representative of the masses--a mere nobody who is driven to action through circumstances beyond his control, including the circumstance of his heredity. Crane's own philosophy of life can certainly be detected underneath the surface of the story. His classical view of man as the pawn of fate shows through. Even the brief moment of glory is achieved unconsciously. Hence the irony of the title. Man, in Crane's view, is not the master of his fate.

12. Might the bucket of water be interpreted as a symbol? Could the author be using the incident to point up something about life that he feels is significant? Did Crane have a purpose beyond presenting an entertaining story? - Water is often used as a symbol for life. We have no way of knowing whether Crane intended the story to be read symbolically, but it would seem to illustrate what we know to have been the author's views on life. Collins might be regarded as typifing man, the helpless victim of controlling circumstances. But even if we reject such an interpretation, it is fairly safe to say Crane was interested in psychological reactions, and this concern, rather than an entertaining narrative, provided the motive for the story.

13. As you read the story, did you notice anything significant about Crane's style? Remember, this story was written about seventy years ago. Look at a sample page, and observe the length and construction of the sentences. P. 89 is a typical example. Read the paragraph beginning "However, he had no full appreciation of anything, excepting that he was actually conscious of being dazed." Compare it with this passage taken from The Old Man and the Sea. Remember Hemingway wrote this more than fifty years later.

> Why was I not born with two good hands? he thought. Perhaps it was my fault in not training that one properly. But God knows he has had enough chances to learn. He did not do so badly in the night, though, and he has only cramped once. If he cramps again let the line cut him off. When he thought that he knew he was not being clear-headed and he thought he should chew some more of the dolphin.

What is the dominant characteristic of both styles? What other aspect of Crane's writing makes him "modern"? - Short, simple sentences and a style appraoching the natural spoken language are characteristics of both Hemingway and Crane. This was a marked departure from the scholarly tradition of writing that Crane was reacting against. A quick look at any page from Poe or Hawthorne will suffice to show the difference between Crane's simple sentences, and the complicated, often lengthy sentences of the earlier writers, with their latinized vocabulary and stylized dialogue.

Crane's story is also modern in structure, focusing as it does upon the psychological response of a man to a situation, rather than upon the plot. The result is not so much a single effect as it is a revelation. The impressionism, the ironic understatement, and the colloquial conversation are also modern features found in Crane's writing.

EXERCISES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPOSITION

1. Using your dictionary, find the meaning and derivation for each word underlined in the text of the story; conflagration, demeanor, imprecation, calamity, carnage, gesticulating, retraction, indolent, blanched.
What did you notice about the derivation of every word except the last? What does this tell you about our language? Can you replace these words with simpler, more often used words? Can you explain this?
Find other words that are derived from the same Latin root as carnage. Explain how the modern English meaning was derived from the Latin.

2. Much of the vividness of Crane's writing comes from his use of simile and metaphor to convey an exact image to the mind of the reader. Look again at some of the examples you discussed in class. Try to create similar metaphors and similes to bring to life descriptions of some of the following:

a) a swimmer, diving into the water and swimming;
b) a mother duck leading her ducklings to the river;
c) a sky-diver making a parachute jump;
d) a train viewed from the air;
e) a sudden shower of rain;
f) a child wading through a puddle;
g) anything else you would like to describe.

3. Write an account of an experience that was frightening for you. Try to describe exactly how you felt both at the time, and afterwards.

4. Is heroism simply the absence of fear in a dangerous situation? Is it possible for a hero to experience fear? Write a definition of heroism as you understand it, and give examples that illustrate your view.

5. With the help of your teacher or librarian, find another story by Stephen Crane. Read it and then write a report, after you have studied the story in the same way you looked at "A Mystery of Heroism." Be sure to discuss what the story is about both on the surface level (the plot), and on a deeper level. Sometimes this general idea is called the theme. Have the details of the story been selected by the author to point up the theme? How important is the setting? How is it developed? Is it given at the beginning, or scattered throughout the story? Is it needed for the theme? Does it help to explain the characters? Does it create a mood or atmosphere? Is it essential to the plot? Are the characters true to life? What impression does the story leave you with?

Some of the titles you might enjoy reading are: "The Open Boat," "The Blue Hotel," "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," "The Gray Sleeve," The Red Badge of Courage (which is sometimes considered a short novel).

With your teacher's permission, you may prepare this as an oral report to be given to the class.

6. Go to the library and find a historical account of a Civil War battle. Compare this account with Crane's description of the battle in "A Mystery of Heroism." Do the historian and the writer have the same purpose in writing? Does this explain their different Point of View? Write a few paragraphs discussing this question, using illustrations from the two accounts that point up the differences.